





# WESLEY'S SERMONS.

SIN IN BELIEVERS.—REPENTANCE IN  
BELIEVERS.—SCRIPTURE WAY OF  
SALVATION.—PATIENCE,  
PERFECTION.

“Do not neglect strongly and explicitly to urge the believers to ‘go on to perfection.’ When this is constantly and earnestly done, the Word is always clothed with power.” — JOHN WESLEY.

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## SIN IN BELIEVERS.

“If any man be in Christ he is a new creature” (2 Cor. v. 17).

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I. Is there then sin in him that is in Christ? Does sin *remain* in one that believes in Him? Is there any sin in them that are born of God, or are they wholly delivered from it? Let no one imagine this to be a question of mere curiosity; or, that it is of little importance whether it be determined one way or the other. Rather, it is a point of the utmost moment to every serious Christian, the resolving of which very nearly concerns both his present and eternal happiness.

And yet I do not know that ever it was controverted in the primitive church. Indeed there was no room for disputing concerning it, as all Christians were agreed. And so far as I have ever observed, the whole body of ancient Christians, who



have left us anything in writing, declare with one voice that even believers in Christ, till they are "strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might," have need to "wrestle with flesh and blood," with an evil nature, as well as "with principalities and powers."

And herein our own church (as indeed in most points) exactly copies after the primitive; declaring in her ninth article, "Original sin is the corruption of the nature of every man, whereby every man is in his own nature inclined to evil, so that the flesh lusteth contrary to the Spirit. And this infection of nature doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated; whereby the lust of the flesh is not subject to the law of God. And although there is no condemnation for them that believe, yet this lust hath of itself the nature of sin."

The testimony is given by all other churches; not only by the Greek and Romish churches; but by every reformed church in Europe, of whatever denomination. Indeed some of these seem to carry



the thing too far; so describing the corruption of heart in a believer, as scarce to allow that he has dominion over it, but rather is in bondage thereto; and by this means, they leave hardly any distinction between a believer and an unbeliever.

To avoid this extreme, many well meaning men, particularly those under the direction of the late Count Zinzendorf, ran into another, affirming that "all true believers are not only saved from the *dominion* of sin, but from the *being* of inward as well as outward sin, so that it no longer *remains* in them." And from them, about twenty years ago, many of our countrymen imbibed the same opinion, that even corruption *is no more* in those who believe in Christ.

It is true that when the Germans were pressed upon this head, they soon allowed, (many of them, at least,) that "sin did still remain *in the flesh*, but not *in the heart* of a believer"; and after a time, when the absurdity of this was shown, they fairly gave up the point, allowing that sin did still remain, though not reign, in him that is born of God.



But the English, who had received it from them, (some directly, some at second or third hand,) were not easily prevailed upon to part with a favorite opinion; and even when the generality of them were convinced it was utterly indefensible, a few could not be persuaded to give it up, but maintain it to this day.

II. For the sake of those who really fear God, and desire to know "the truth as it is in Jesus," it may not be amiss to consider the point with calmness and impartiality. In this, I use indifferently the words, *regenerate*, *justified*, or *believers*; since, though they have not precisely the same meaning, (the first implying an inward, actual change, the second a relative one, and the third the means whereby both the one and the other wrought) yet they come to one and the same thing, as every one that believes is both justified and born of God.

By sin, I here understand inward sin, any sinful temper, passion or affection, such as pride, self-will, love of the world,



in any kind or degree, such as lust, anger, peevishness, any disposition contrary to the mind which was in Christ.

The question is not concerning *outward sin*, whether a child of God *commit sin* or no. We all agree and earnestly maintain, "He that committeth sin is of the devil." We agree, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin." 'Neither do we now inquire whether inward sin will *always* remain in the children of God; whether sin will continue in the soul, as long as it continues in the body; nor yet do we inquire whether a justified person may *relapse* either into inward or outward sin; but simply this: Is a justified or regenerated man freed from *all* sin as soon as he is justified? Is there then no sin in his heart?—nor ever after, unless he fall from grace?

We allow that the state of a justified person is inexpressibly great and glorious. He is born again, "not of blood, nor of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." He is a child of God, a member of



Christ, an heir of the kingdom of heaven. "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keepeth his heart and mind in Christ Jesus." His very body is a "temple of the Holy Ghost," and a "habitation of God through the Spirit." He is "created anew in Christ Jesus;" he is *washed*, he is *sanctified*. His heart is purified by faith; he is cleansed "from the corruption that is in the world"; "the love of God is shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto him." And so long as he "walketh in love," (which he may always do) he worships God in spirit and in truth. He keepeth the commandments of God, and doeth those things that are pleasing in His sight; so exercising himself as to "have a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man"; and he has power both over outward and inward sin, even from the moment he is justified.

III. But was he not then freed from all sin, so that there is no sin in his heart? I cannot say this; I cannot believe it; because Paul says to the contrary. He is



speaking to believers, and describing the state of believers in general, when he says, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: these are contrary one to the other" (Gal. v. 17). Nothing can be more express. The apostle here directly affirms that the flesh, evil nature, opposes the Spirit, even in believers; that even in the regenerate, there are two principles, "contrary one to the other."

Again: when he writes to the believers at Corinth, to those who were sanctified in Christ Jesus, (1 Cor. i: 2), he says, "I, brethren, could not speak unto you, as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, as unto babes in Christ. Ye are yet carnal; for whereas there is among you envying and strife, are ye not carnal?" (ch. iii. vers. 1-3). Now here the apostle speaks unto those who were unquestionably believers,—whom in the same breath he styles his brethren in Christ, as being still, in a measure, carnal. He affirms, there was envying (an evil temper), occasioning strife among them, and yet does not give the least intimation



that they had lost their faith. Nay, he manifestly declares they had not; for then they would not have been babes in Christ, And (what is most remarkable of all) he speaks of being carnal, and babes in Christ, as one and the same thing; plainly showing that every believer is (in a degree) carnal, while he is only a babe in Christ.

Indeed, this grand point, that there are two contrary principles in believers, nature and grace, the flesh and the Spirit, runs through the epistles of St. Paul, yea, through all the Holy Scriptures; almost all the directions and exhortations therein, are founded on this supposition, pointing at wrong tempers or practices in those who are, notwithstanding, acknowledged by the inspired writers to be believers. And they are continually exhorted to fight with and to conquer these, by the power of the faith which was in them.

And who can doubt that there was faith in the angel of the church of Ephesus, when our Lord said to him "I know thy works, and thy labor, and thy patience:



thou hast patience, and for my name's sake hast labored and hast not fainted" (Rev. ii. 2-4). But was there, meantime, no sin in his heart? Yea, or Christ would not have added, "Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." This was a real sin which God saw in his heart; of which, accordingly, he is exhorted to *repent*; and yet we have no authority to say that even then he had no faith.

Nay, the angel of the church at Pergamos, also, is exhorted to *repent*, which implies sin, though our Lord expressly says, "Thou hast not denied my faith" (v. 13-16.) And to the angel of the church in Sardis, he says, "Strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die." The good which remained was *ready to die*; but was not equally dead (chap. iii. 2.) So there was still a spark of faith even in him; which he is accordingly commanded to *hold fast* (ver. 3.)

Once more: when the apostle exhorts believers to "cleanse themselves from all



filthiness of flesh and spirit" (2 Cor. vii. 1) he plainly teaches that those believers were not yet cleansed therefrom.

Will you answer, "He that abstains from all appearance of evil," does *ipso facto* "cleanse themselves from all filthiness." Not in any wise. For instance: a man reviles me; I feel resentment, which is filthiness of spirit; yet I say not a word. Here I "abstain from all appearance of evil"; but this does not cleanse me from that filthiness of spirit, as I experience to my sorrow.

And as this position, there is no sin in a believer, no carnal mind, no bent to backsliding, is thus contrary to the word of God, so it is to the experience of his children. These continually feel a heart bent to backsliding, a natural tendency to evil, a proneness to depart from God, and cleave to the things of earth. They are daily sensible of sin remaining in the heart, pride, self-will, unbelief; and of sin cleaving to all they speak or do, even their best actions and holiest duties. Yet



at the same time they "know that they are of God"; they cannot doubt it for a moment. They feel his Spirit clearly "witnessing with their spirit, that they are the children of God." They "rejoice in God through Christ Jesus, by whom they have now received the atonement." So that they are equally assured, that sin is in them, and that "Christ is in them the hope of glory."

"But can Christ be in the same heart where sin is? Undoubtedly he can. Otherwise it never could be saved therefrom. Where the sickness is, there is the physician,

"Carrying on His work within,  
Striving till He cast out sin."

Christ indeed cannot *reign* where sin reigns; neither will He *dwell* where any sin is *allowed*. But He *is* and *dwells* in the heart of every believer who is *fighting against* all sin; although it be not yet purified, according to the purification of the sanctuary.

It has been observed before that the



opposite doctrine, that there is no sin in believers, is quite new in the church of Christ; that it was never heard of for seventeen hundred years; never till it was discovered by Count Zinzendorf. I do not remember to have seen the least intimation of it, either in any ancient or modern writer; unless, perhaps, in some of the wild, ranting Antinomians. And these likewise say and unsay, acknowledging there is sin *in their flesh*, although no *sin in the heart*. But whatever doctrine is *new* must be *wrong*; for the *old* religion is the only *true* one; and no doctrine can be right, unless it is the very same "which was from the beginning."

One argument more against this new, unscriptural doctrine may be drawn from the dreadful consequences of it. One says, "I felt anger to-day." Must I reply, "Then you have no faith"? Another says, "I know what you advise is good, but my will is quite averse to it." Must I tell him, "Then you are an unbeliever, under the wrath and the curse of God"?



What will be the natural consequence of this? Why, if he believe what I say, his soul will not only be grieved and wounded, but perhaps utterly destroyed; inasmuch as he will “cast away” that “confidence which hath great recompense of reward”; and having cast away his shield, how shall he “quench the fiery darts of the wicked one”? How shall he “overcome the world”?—seeing “this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” He stands disarmed in the midst of his enemies, open to all their assaults. What wonder, then, if he be utterly overthrown; if they take him captive at their will; yea, if he fall from one wickedness to another, and never see good any more? I cannot therefore by any means receive this assertion, that there is no sin in a believer from the moment he is justified; first, because it is contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture; secondly, because it is contrary to the experience of the children of God; thirdly, because it is absolutely new, never heard of in the world till yes-



terday; and lastly, because it is naturally attended with the most fatal consequences, not only grieving those whom God hath not grieved, but perhaps dragging them into everlasting perdition.

IV. However, let us give a fair hearing to the chief arguments of those who endeavor to support it. And it is from Scripture they attempt to prove that there is no sin in a believer. They argue thus: "The Scripture says, Every believer is born of God, is clean, is holy, is sanctified, is pure in heart, has a new heart, is a temple of the Holy Ghost. Now, as 'that which is born of the flesh is flesh,' is altogether evil, so 'that which is born of the Spirit is spirit,' is altogether good. Again: a man cannot be clean, sanctified, holy, and at the same time unclean, unsanctified, unholy. He cannot be pure and impure, or have a new and an old heart together. Neither can his soul be unholy while it is a temple of the Holy Ghost."

I have put this objection as strong as possible, that its full weight may appear.



Let us now examine it, part by part. And, 1. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit' is altogether good." I allow the text, but not the comment. For the text affirms this, and no more, That every man who is "born of the Spirit" is a spiritual man. He is so. But so he may be, and yet not be altogether spiritual. The Christians at Corinth were spiritual men, else they had been no Christians at all; and yet they were not altogether spiritual; they were still, in part, carnal. "But they were fallen from grace." St. Paul says no. They were even then babes in Christ. 2. "But a man cannot be clean, sanctified, holy, and at the same time unclean, unsanctified, unholy." Indeed he may. So the Corinthians were. "Ye are washed," says the apostle, "ye are sanctified"; namely, cleansed from "fornication, idolatry, drunkenness," and all other outward sin (1 Cor. vi, 9, 10, 11); and yet, at the same time, in another sense of the word, they were unsanctified; they were not washed, not inwardly cleansed from envy,



evil surmising, partiality. "But sure they had not a new heart and an old heart together." It is most sure they had, for at that very time their hearts were *truly*, yet not entirely renewed. Their carnal mind was nailed to the cross, yet it was not wholly destroyed. "But could they be unholy while they were 'temples of the Holy Ghost'?" Yes; that they were temples of the Holy Ghost is certain (1 Cor. vi. 19), and it is equally certain they were in some degree carnal, that is, unholy.

"However, there is one Scripture more which will put the matter out of question: 'If any man be (a believer) in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away; behold all things are become new' (2 Cor. v. 17). Now certainly a man cannot be a new creature and an old creature at once." Yes, he may; he may be partly renewed, which was the very case with those at Corinth. They were doubtless "renewed in the spirit of their mind," or they could not have been so much as "habeo



in Christ"; yet they had not the whole mind which was in Christ, for they *envied* one another. "But it is said expressly, 'Old things are passed away; all things are become new.'" But we must not so interpret the apostle's words as to make him contradict himself. And if we will make him consistent with himself, the plain meaning of the words is this: His old judgment concerning justification, holiness, happiness, indeed, concerning the things of God in general, is now passed away; so are his old desires, designs, affections, tempers, and conversation. All these are undeniably become new, greatly changed from what they were. And yet, though they are new, they are not wholly new. Still he feels, to his sorrow and shame, remains of the "old man," too manifest taints of his former tempers and affections, though they cannot gain any advantage over him as long as he watches unto prayer.

This whole argument, "If he is holy, he is holy" (and twenty more expressions of



the same kind may easily be heaped together), is really no better than playing upon words; it is the fallacy of arguing from a *particular* to a *general*; of inferring a conclusion from particular premises. Propose the sentence entire and it runs thus: "If he is holy *at all*, he is holy *altogether*." That does not follow; every babe in Christ is holy, and yet not altogether so. He is saved from sin, yet not entirely; it *remains*, though it does not *reign*. If you think it does not *remain* (in babes, at least, whatever be the case with young men or fathers), you certainly have not considered the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of the law of God (even the law of love laid down by St. Paul in the thirteenth of Corinthians), and that *every* discomformity to, or deviation from this law, *is sin*. Now is there no discomformity to this in the heart or life of a believer? What may be in an adult Christian is another question; but what a stranger must he be to human nature who can possibly imagine that *this* is the case with every babe in Christ?



“But believers walk after the Spirit (Romans viii. 1) and the Spirit of God dwells in them; consequently they are delivered from the guilt and power, or in one word, the being of sin.”

These are coupled together as if they were the same thing. But they are not the same thing. The *guilt* is one thing, the *power* another, and the *being* yet another. That believers are delivered from the *guilt* and *power* of sin we allow; that they are delivered from the *being* of it we deny. Nor does it in any wise follow from these texts. A man may have the Spirit of God dwelling in him, and may “walk after the Spirit,” though he still feels “the flesh lusting against the Spirit.”

“But the ‘Church is the body of Christ’ (Col. i. 24); this implies that its members are washed from all filthiness; otherwise it will follow that Christ and Belial are incorporated with each other.”

Nay, it will not follow from hence, “Those who are the mystical body of Christ still feel the flesh lusting against the Spirit,”



that Christ has any fellowship with the devil, or with that sin which he enables them to resist and overcome.

“But are not Christians ‘come to the heavenly Jerusalem,’ where ‘nothing defiled can enter’?” (Heb. xii. 22) Yes; “and to an innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect”; that is,

“Earth and heaven all agree,  
All in one great family.”

And they are likewise holy and undefiled while they “walk after the Spirit,” although sensible there is another principle in them, and that “these are contrary to each other.”

“But Christians are reconciled to God. Now this could not be if any of the carnal mind remained, for this is enmity against God; consequently, no reconciliation can be effected but by its total destruction.”

We are “reconciled to God through the blood of the cross,” and in that moment the corruption of nature, which is enmity with God, is put under our feet; the flesh



has no more dominion over us. But it still *exists*; and it is still in its nature enmity with God, lusting against his Spirit.

“But ‘they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts’” (Gal. v. 24). They have so, yet it remains in them still, and often struggles to break from the cross. “Nay, but they have ‘put off the old man with his deeds’” (Col. iii. 9). They have, and in the sense above described, “old things are passed away; all things are become new.” A hundred texts may be cited to the same effect, and they will all admit of the same answer. “But to say all in one word, ‘Christ gave himself for the Church, that it might be holy and without blemish’” (Eph. v. 25–27). And so it will be in the end; but it never was yet, from the beginning to this day.

“But let experience speak; all who are justified do at that time find an absolute freedom from all sin.” That I doubt; but if they do, do they find it ever after?



Else you gain nothing. "If they do not, it is their own fault." That remains to be proved.

"But in the very nature of things, can a man have pride in him and not be proud; anger, and yet not be angry?"

A man may have *pride* in him, may think of himself in some particulars above what he ought to think (and so be proud in that particular), and yet not be a proud man in his general character. He may have *anger* in him, yea, and a strong propensity to furious anger, without *giving* way to it. "But can anger and pride be in that heart where *only* meekness and humility are felt?" No; but *some* pride and anger may be in that heart where there is much humility and meekness.

"It avails not to say, these tempers are there, but they do not *reign*; for sin cannot, in any kind or degree, exist where it does not reign; for *guilt* and *power* are essential properties of sin. Therefore, where one of them is, all must be."

Strange indeed! "Sin cannot, in any



kind or degree, *exist* where it does not *reign*." Absolutely contrary, this, to all experience, all Scripture, all common sense. Resentment of an affront is sin; it is disconformity to the law of love. This has existed in me a thousand times; yet it did not and does not *reign*. "But *guilt* and *power* are essential properties of sin; therefore where one is all must be." No; in the instance before us, if the resentment I feel is not yielded to, even for a moment, there is no guilt at all, no condemnation from God upon that account. And in this case it has no *power*; though it lusteth against the Spirit, it cannot prevail. Here, therefore, as in ten thousand instances, there is *sin* without either *guilt* or *power*.

"But the supposing sin in a believer is pregnant with everything frightful and discouraging. It implies the contending with a power that has the possession of our strength, maintains his usurpation of our hearts, and there prosecutes the war in defiance of our Redeemer." Not so;



the supposing sin is in us does not imply that it has the possession of our strength, any more than a man crucified has the possession of those that crucify him. As little does it imply that "sin maintains its usurpation of our hearts." The usurper is dethroned; he remains indeed where he once reigned, but remains *in chains*. So that he does, in some sense, "prosecute the war," yet he grows weaker and weaker, while the believer goes on from strength to strength, conquering and to conquer.

"I am not satisfied yet; he that hath sin in him is a slave to sin. Therefore you suppose a man to be justified while he is a slave to sin. Now if you allow men may be justified while they have pride, anger, or unbelief in them; nay, if you aver, these are (at least for a time) in all that are justified, what wonder that we have so many proud, angry, unbelieving believers?"

I do not suppose any man who is justified is a slave to sin, yet I do suppose sin remains (at least for a time) in all that are justified.



“But if sin remains in a believer, he is a sinful man; if pride, for instance, then he is proud; if self-will, then he is self-willed; if unbelief, then he is an unbeliever; consequently, no believer at all. How, then, does he differ from unbelievers, from unregenerate men?” This is still mere playing with words. It means no more than if there is sin, pride, self-will in him, then—there is sin, pride, self-will. And this nobody can deny. In that sense, then, he is proud or self-willed. But he is not proud or self-willed in the same sense that unbelievers are, that is, *governed* by pride or self-will. Herein he differs from unregenerate men. They *obey* sin, he does not. Flesh is in them both, but they *walk after the flesh*; he *walks after the Spirit*.

“But how can *unbelief* be in a believer?” That word has two meanings. It means either no faith, or little faith; either the *absence* of faith or the *weakness* of it. In the former sense, unbelief is not in a believer; in the latter, it is in all babes.



Their faith is commonly mixed with doubt or fear, that is, in the latter sense, with unbelief. "Why are ye fearful (says the Lord), oh ye of little faith?" Again, "Oh thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" You see here was *unbelief* in *believers*; little faith and much unbelief.

"But this doctrine, that sin remains in a believer, that a man may be in the favor of God while he has sin in his heart, certainly tends to encourage men in sin." Understand the proposition right, and no such consequence follows. A man may be in God's favor though he feel sin, but not if he *yield* to it. *Having sin* does not forfeit the favor of God; *giving way to sin* does. Though the flesh in you "lust against the Spirit," you may still be a child of God; but if you "walk after the flesh" you are a child of the devil. Now this doctrine does not encourage to *obey* sin, but to resist it with all your might.

V. The sum of all this: There are in every person, even after he is justified, two contrary principles, nature and grace,



termed by St. Paul, the *flesh* and the *Spirit*. Hence, though even babes in Christ are *sanctified*, yet it is only in part. In a degree, according to the measure of their faith, they are spiritual; yet, in a degree, they are carnal. Accordingly, believers are continually exhorted to watch against the flesh, as well as the world and the devil. And to this agrees the constant experience of the children of God. While they feel the witness in themselves, they feel a will not wholly resigned to the will of God. They know they are in Him, and yet find a heart ready to depart from Him, a proneness to evil in many instances, and a backwardness to that which is good. The contrary doctrine is wholly new—never heard of in the Church of Christ, from the time of His coming into the world, till the time of Count Zinzendorf; and it is attended with the most fatal consequence. It cuts off all watching against our evil nature, against the Delilah which we are told is gone, though she is still lying in our bosom. It tears away the



shield of weak believers, deprives them of their faith, and so leaves them exposed to all the assaults of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Let us, therefore, hold fast the sound doctrine "once delivered to the saints," and delivered down by them, with the written word, to all succeeding generations; that although we are renewed, cleansed, purified, sanctified, the moment we truly believe in Christ, yet we are not then renewed, cleansed, purified altogether; but the flesh, the evil nature, still remains, though subdued, and wars against the Spirit. So much the more let us use all diligence in "fighting the good fight of faith." So much the more earnestly let us "watch and pray" against the enemy within. The more carefully let us take to ourselves, and "put on the whole armor of God," that, although "we wrestle" both "with flesh and blood, and with principalities, and powers, and wicked spirits in high places," we "may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand."



## REPENTANCE IN BELIEVERS.

“Repent ye, and believe the Gospel” (Mark i. 15).

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It is generally supposed that repentance and faith are only the gate of religion; that they are necessary only at the beginning of our Christian course, when we are setting out in the way to the kingdom. And this may seem to be confirmed by the great apostle, where, exhorting the Hebrew Christians to “go on to perfection,” he teaches them to *leave* these “first principles of the doctrine of Christ,” “not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God”; which must at least mean that they should comparatively leave these, that at first took up all their thoughts, in order to “press forward towards the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”



And this is undoubtedly true, that there is a repentance and a faith, which are, more especially, necessary at the beginning; a repentance, which is a conviction of our utter sinfulness and guiltiness and helplessness; and which precedes our receiving that kingdom of God, which our Lord observes is "within us," and a faith whereby we receive that kingdom, even "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

But, notwithstanding this, there is also a repentance and a faith (taking the words in another sense, a sense not quite the same, nor yet entirely different) which are requisite after we have "believed the gospel"; yea, and in every subsequent stage of our Christian course, or we cannot "run the race which is set before us." And this repentance and faith are full as necessary in order to our *continuance and growth* in grace, as the former faith and repentance were in order to our *entering* into the kingdom of God.

But in what sense are we to repent and believe after we are justified? This is an



important question, and worthy of being considered with the utmost attention.

I. And first, in what sense are we to repent?

Repentance frequently means an inward change—a change of mind from sin to holiness. But we now speak of it in a quite different sense, as it is one kind of self-knowledge, the knowing ourselves sinners, yea, guilty, helpless sinners, even though we know we are children of God.

Indeed, when we first know this, when we first find redemption in the blood of Jesus, when the love of God is first shed abroad in our hearts, and His kingdom set up therein, it is natural to suppose that we are no longer sinners; that all our sins are not only covered, but destroyed. As we do not then feel any evil in our hearts, we readily imagine none is there. Nay, some well-meaning men have imagined this not only at that time, but ever after, having persuaded themselves that when they were justified they were entirely sanctified; yea, they have laid it down as a general rule, in spite of Scripture, rea-



son and experience. These sincerely believe, and earnestly maintain, that all sin is destroyed when we are justified, and that there is no sin in the heart of a believer; that it is altogether clean from that moment. But though we readily acknowledge "he that believeth is born of God," and he that is born of God doth not commit sin," yet we cannot allow that he does not *feel* it within; it does not *reign*. but it does remain. And a conviction of the sin which *remains* in our heart is one great branch of the repentance we are now speaking of.

For it is seldom long before he who imagined all sin was gone feels there is still *pride* in his heart. He is convinced both that in many respects he has thought of himself more highly than he ought to think, and that he has taken to himself the praise of something he had received, and gloried in it as though he had not received it; and yet he knows he is in the favor of God. He cannot, and ought not, "to cast away his confidence." "The Spirit"



still "witnesses with" his "spirit, that he is a child of God."

Nor is it long before he feels *self-will* in his heart; even a will contrary to the will of God. A will every man must inevitably have, as long as he has an understanding. This is an essential part of human nature, indeed, of the nature of every intelligent being. Our blessed Lord himself had a will as a man; otherwise He had not been a man. But His human will was invariably subject to the will of His Father. At all times, and on all occasions, even in the deepest affliction, He could say, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt." But this is not the case at all times, even with a true believer in Christ. He frequently finds his will more or less exalting itself against the will of God. He wills something, because it is pleasing to nature, which is not pleasing to God; and he wills (is averse from) something, because it is painful to nature, which is the will of God concerning him. Indeed, suppose he continues in the faith, he fights against it with all his might; but this very thing



implies that it really exists, and that he is conscious of it.

Now self-will, as well as pride, is a species of *idolatry*; and both are directly contrary to the love of God. The same observation may be made concerning the "*love of the world.*" But this, likewise, even true believers are liable to feel in themselves; and every one of them does feel it, more or less, sooner or later, in one branch or another. It is true, when he first "passes from death unto life," he desires nothing more but God. He can truly say, "All my desire is unto thee, and unto the remembrance of thy name"; "Whom have I in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." But it is not so always. In process of time he will feel again, though perhaps only for a few moments, either "the desire of the flesh," or "the desire of the eye," or "the pride of life." Nay, if he does not continually watch and pray, he may find lust reviving; yea, and thrusting sore at him that he may fall, till he has scarce any strength left in him. He



may feel the assaults of *inordinate affection*; yea, a strong propensity to "love the creature more than the Creator"; whether it be a child, a parent, a husband, or a wife, or "the friend that is as his own soul." He may reel in a thousand various ways, a desire of earthly things or pleasures. In the same proportion, he will forget God, not seeking his happiness in Him, and consequently being a "lover of pleasure more than a lover of God."

If he does not keep himself every moment, he will again feel *the desire of the eye*; the desire of gratifying his imagination with something great, or beautiful, or uncommon. In how many ways does this desire assault the soul? Perhaps with regard to the poorest trifles, such as dress, or furniture; things never designed to satisfy the appetite of an immortal spirit. Yet, how natural is it for us, even after we have "tasted of the powers of the world to come," to sink again into these foolish, low desires of things, that perish in the using! How hard is it, even for those who know in whom they have



believed, to conquer but one branch of the desire of the eye, curiosity; constantly to trample it under their feet; to desire nothing, merely because it is new.

And how hard is it, even for the children of God, wholly to conquer the *pride of life*! St. John seems to mean by this, nearly the same with what the world terms the sense of honor. This is no other than a desire of, and delight in, "the honor that cometh of men"; a desire and love of praise; and, which is always joined with it, a proportionable *fear of dispraise*. Nearly allied to this, is *evil shame*; the being ashamed of that wherein we ought to glory. And this is seldom divided from the *fear of man*, which brings a thousand snares upon the soul. Now where is he, even among those that seem strong in faith, who does not find in himself a degree of all these evil tempers? So that even these are but in part "crucified to the world"; for the evil root still remains in their heart.

And do we not feel other tempers, which are as contrary to the love of our neighbor



as these are to the love God? The love of our neighbor "thinketh no evil." Do not we find anything of the kind? Do we never find any *jealousies*, any *evil surmisings*, any groundless or unreasonable suspicions? He that is clear in these respects, let him cast the first stone at his neighbor. Who does not sometimes feel other tempers, or inward motions, which he knows are contrary to brotherly love? If nothing of *malice*, *hatred*, or *bitterness*, is there no touch of *envy*; particularly towards those who enjoy some real or supposed good, which we desire but cannot attain? Do we never find any degree of *resentment*, when we are injured or affronted; especially by those whom we peculiarly loved, and whom we had most labored to help and oblige? Does injustice or ingratitude never excite in us any desire of *revenge*? any desire of returning evil for evil, instead of "overcoming evil with good?" This also shows how much is still in our heart which is contrary to the love of our neighbor.

~~The~~ *jealousness*, in every kind and degree,



is certainly as contrary to this as to the love of God; whether *the love of money*, which is too frequently "the root of all evil"; or literally, a desire of *having more*, or increasing in substance. And how few, even of the real children of God, are entirely free from both! Indeed, one great man, Martin Luther, used to say, he "never had any covetousness in him, not only in his converted state, but ever since he was born." But, if so, I would not scruple to say, he was the only man born of a woman, except Him that was God as well as man, who had not, who was born without it. Nay, I believe never was any one born of God, that lived any considerable time after, who did not feel more or less of it many times, especially in the latter sense. We may, therefore, set it down as an undoubted truth, that covetousness, together with pride, and self-will and anger, remain in the hearts even of them that are justified.

It is their experiencing this, which has inclined so many serious persons to understand the latter part of the seventh chap-



ter of Romans, not of them that are "under the law," that are convinced of sin, which is undoubtedly the meaning of the apostle, but of them that are "under grace"; that are "justified freely through the redemption that is in Christ." And it is most certain, they are thus far right; there does still *remain*, even in them that are justified, a *mind* which is in some measure *carnal* (so the apostle tells even the believers at Corinth, "Ye are carnal"); a *heart bent to backsliding*, still ever ready to "depart from the living God"; a propensity to pride, self-will, anger, revenge, love of the world, yea, and all evil; a root of bitterness, which, if the restraint were taken off for a moment, would instantly spring up; yea, such a depth of corruption, as, without clear light from God, we cannot possibly conceive. And a conviction of all this sin *remaining* in *their hearts*, is the repentance which belongs to them that are justified.

But we should likewise be convinced, that as sin remains in our hearts, so it *cleaves* to all our words and actions. In-



deed, it is to be feared that many of our words are more than mixed with sin; that they are sinful altogether; for such undoubtedly is all *uncharitable conversation*; all which does not spring from brotherly love; all which does not agree with that golden rule, "What ye would that others should do to you, even so do unto them." Of this kind is all backbiting, all tale-bearing, all whispering, all evil speaking, that is repeating the faults of absent persons; for none would have others repeat his faults when he is absent. Now how few are there, even among believers, who are in no degree guilty of this; who steadily observe the good old rule, "Of the dead and the absent—nothing but good!" And suppose they do, do they likewise abstain from *unprofitable conversation*? Yet all this is unquestionably sinful, and "grieves the Holy Spirit of God"; yea, and "for every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account in the day of Judgment."

But let it be supposed that they continually "watch and pray," and so do "not enter into this temptation"; that they



constantly set a watch before their mouth, and keep the door of their lips; suppose they exercise themselves herein, that *all* their "conversation may be in grace, seasoned with salt, and meet to minister grace to the hearers"; yet do they not daily slide into useless discourse, notwithstanding all their caution? And even when they endeavor to speak for God, are their words pure, free from unholy mixtures? Do they find nothing wrong in their very *intention*? Do they speak merely to please God, and not partly to please themselves? Is it wholly to do the will of God, and not their own will also? Or, if they begin with a single eye, do they go on "looking unto Jesus," and talking with Him all the time they are talking with their neighbor? When they are reproving sin, do they feel no anger or unkind temper to the sinner? When they are instructing the ignorant, do they not find any pride, any self-preference? When they are comforting the afflicted, or provoking one another to love and to good works, do they never perceive any inward



self-commendation, "Now you have spoken well?" Or any vanity, a desire that others should think so, and esteem them on this account? In some or all of these respects, how much sin cleaves to the best *conversation* even of believers? The conviction of which is another branch of the repentance, which belongs to them that are justified.

And how much sin, if their conscience is thoroughly awake, may they find cleaving to *their actions* also? Nay, are there not many of these, which, though they are such as the world would not condemn, yet cannot be commended, no, nor excused, if we judge by the Word of God? Are there not many of their actions, which, they themselves know, are not to the glory of God? Many, wherein they did not even aim at this; which were not undertaken with an eye to God? And of those that were, are there not many, wherein their eye is not singly fixed on God? Wherein they are doing their own will, at least as much as His; and seeking to please themselves as much, if not more, than to please



God ? And while they are endeavoring to do good to their neighbor, do they not feel wrong tempers of various kinds ? Hence their good actions, so called, are far from being strictly such ; being polluted with such a mixture of evil ? Such are their works of *mercy*. And is not the same mixture in their works of *piety* ? While they are hearing the Word, which is able to save their souls, do they not frequently find such thoughts as make them afraid lest it should turn to their condemnation, rather than their salvation ? Is it not often the same case, while they are endeavoring to offer up their prayers to God, whether in public or private ? Nay, while they are engaged in the most solemn service, even while they are at the table of the Lord, what manner of thoughts arise in them ? Are not their hearts sometimes wandering to the ends of the earth ? sometimes filled with such imaginations as make them fear lest all their sacrifice should be an abomination to the Lord ? So that they are now more ashamed of their best duties, than they were once of their worst sins.



Again: How many *sins of omission* are they chargeable with? We know the words of the apostle, "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." But do they not know a thousand instances, wherein they might have done good, to enemies, to strangers, to their brethren, either with regard to their bodies or their souls, and they did it not? How many omissions have they been guilty of, in their duty towards God! How many opportunities of communicating, of hearing His Word, of public or private prayer, have they neglected! So great reason had even that holy man, Archbishop Usher, after all his labors for God, to cry out, almost with his dying breath, "Lord, forgive me my sins of omission!"

But, beside these outward omissions, may they not find in themselves *inward defects* without number? Defects of every kind: they have not the love, the fear, the confidence, they ought to have, towards God. They have not the love which is due to their neighbor, to every child of man; no, nor even that which is due to



their brethren, to every child of God, whether those that are at a distance from them, or those with whom they are immediately connected. They have no holy temper in the degree they ought; they are defective in everything; in a deep consciousness of which they are ready to cry out with M. DeRenty, "I am a ground overrun with thorns"; or with Job, "I am vile: I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

A conviction of their guiltiness is another branch of that repentance which belongs to the children of God. But this is cautiously to be understood, and in a peculiar sense. For it is certain, "there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus," that believe in Him, and in the power of that faith, "walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Yet can they no more bear the *strict justice* of God, now, than before they believed. This pronounces them to be still *worthy of death*, on all the preceding accounts. And it would absolutely condemn them thereto, were it not for the atoning blood. Therefore they are thoroughly convinced, that they still *de-*



*serve* punishment, although it is hereby turned aside from them. But here there are extremes on one hand and on the other, and few steer clear of them. Most men strike on one or the other, either thinking themselves condemned when they are not, or thinking they *deserve* to be acquitted. Nay, the truth lies between: they still *deserve*, strictly speaking, only the damnation of hell. But what they deserve does not come upon them, because they "have an Advocate with the Father." His life, and death, and intercession, still interpose between them and condemnation.

A conviction of their *utter helplessness*, is yet another branch of this repentance. I mean hereby two things: First, (that they are no more able now *of themselves* to think one good thought, to form one good desire, to speak one good word, or do one good work, than before they were justified; that they have still no kind or degree of strength *of their own*; no power either to do good, or resist evil; no ability to conquer, or even withstand the world, the devil, or their own evil nature) They



man, it is certain, do all these things; but it is not by their own strength. They have power to overcome all these enemies; for "sin hath no more dominion over them"; but it is not from nature, either in whole or in part; it is the *mere* gift of God; nor is it given all at once, as if they had a stock laid up for many years; but from moment to moment.

By this helplessness I mean, secondly, an absolute inability to deliver ourselves from that guiltiness or desert of punishment whereof we are still conscious; yea, and an inability to remove, by all the grace we have (to say nothing of our natural powers), either the pride, selfwill, love of the world, anger, and general proneness to depart from God, which we experimentally know to *remain* in the heart even of them that are regenerate; or the evil which, in spite of all our endeavors, cleaves to all our words and actions. Add to this, an utter inability wholly to avoid uncharitable, and much more, unprofitable conversation; and an inability to avoid sins of omission, or to supply the numberless de-



fects we are convinced of; especially the want of love, and other right tempers, both to God and man.

If any man is not satisfied of this, if any believes that whoever is justified is able to remove these sins out of his heart and life, let him make the experiment. Let him try whether, by the grace he has already received, he can expel pride, self-will, or inbred sin in general. Let him try whether he can cleanse his words and actions from all mixture of evil; whether he can avoid all uncharitable and unprofitable conversation, with all the sins of omission; and, lastly, whether he can supply the numberless defects which he still finds in himself. Let him not be discouraged by one or two experiments, but repeat the trial again and again; and the longer he tries, the more deeply will he be convinced of his utter helplessness in all these respects.

Indeed this is so evident a truth, that wellnigh all the children of God, scattered abroad, however they differ in other points, yet generally agree in this; that although



we may, "by the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body"; resist and conquer both outward and inward sin; although we may weaken our enemies day by day; yet we cannot *drive them out*. By all the grace which is given at justification, we cannot extirpate them. Though we watch and pray ever so much, we cannot wholly cleanse either our hearts or hands. Most sure we cannot till it shall please our Lord to speak to our hearts again, to speak the second time, Be clean; and then only the leprosy is cleansed. Then only, the evil root, the carnal mind, is destroyed; and inbred sin subsists no more. But if there be no second change, if there be no instantaneous deliverance after justification, if there be *none but* a gradual work of God, (that there is a gradual work none denies) then we must be content, as well as we can, to remain full of sin till death; and, if so, we must remain guilty till death, continually *deserving* punishment. For it is impossible the guilt, or desert of punishment, should be removed from us, as long as all this sin remains in our heart, and



cleaves to our words and actions. Nay, in rigorous justice, all we think, and speak, and act, continually increases it.

II. In this sense we are to *repent*, after we are justified. And till we do so, we can go no farther. For, till we are sensible of our disease, it admits of no cure. But, supposing we do thus repent, then are we called to "believe the gospel."

And this, also, is to be understood in a peculiar sense, different from that wherein we believed in order to justification. Believe the glad tidings of great salvation, which God hath prepared for all people. Believe that He who is "the brightness of his Father's glory, the express image of his person," is "able to save unto the uttermost all that come unto God through him." He is able to save you from all the sin that still remains in your heart. He is able to save you from all the sin that cleaves to all your words and actions. He is able to save you from sins of omission, and to supply whatever is wanting in you. It is true, this is impossible with man; but with God-man, all things are possible.



For what can be too hard for Him, who hath "all power in heaven and in earth"? Indeed, His bare power to do this is not a sufficient foundation for our faith that He will do it, that He will thus exert His power, unless He hath promised it. But this He has done; He has promised it over and over, in the strongest terms. He has given us these "exceeding great and precious promises," both in the Old and the New Testament. So we read in the law, in the most ancient part of the oracles of God, "the Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul" (Deut. xxx. 6). So in the Psalms, "He shall redeem Israel (the Israel of God) from all his sins." So in the prophet: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean; from all your filthiness and from all your idols will I cleanse you. And I will put my Spirit within you, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them. I will also save you from all your uncleanness" (Ezek. xxxvi. 25, etc.). So like-



wise in the New Testament: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up a horn of salvation for us — to perform the oath which he sware to our father Abraham. That he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, should serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life" (Luke i. 68, etc.).

You have therefore good reason to believe, He is not only able, but *willing* to do this; to cleanse you from all your filthiness of flesh and spirit; to "save you from all your uncleannesses." This is the thing which you now long for; this is the faith which you now particularly need, namely, that the Great Physician, the Lover of my soul, is willing to make me clean. But is He willing to do this to-morrow or to-day? Let Him answer for Himself: "To-day, if ye will hear" my "voice, harden not your hearts." If you put it off till to-morrow, you harden your hearts; you refuse to hear His voice. Believe therefore that He is willing to **save**



you *to-day*. He is willing to save you *now*. "Behold, now is the accepted time." He now saith, "Be thou clean!" Only believe; and you also will immediately find, "All things are possible to him that believeth."

Continue to believe in Him that loved thee, and gave Himself for thee; that bore all thy sins in His own body on the tree; and He saveth thee from all condemnation, by His blood continually applied. Thus it is that we continue in a justified state. And when we go on "from faith to faith," when we have faith to be cleansed from indwelling sin, to be saved from all our uncleannesses, we are likewise saved from all that *guilt*, that *desert* of punishment, which we felt before. So that then we may say, not only,

"Every moment, Lord, I *want*  
The merit of Thy death!"

but, likewise, in the full assurance of faith,

"Every moment, Lord, I *have*  
The merit of Thy death!"

For, by that faith in His life, death, and intercession for us, renewed from moment to moment, we are every whit clean, and there is not only now no condemnation for



us, but no such desert of punishment as was before, the Lord cleansing both our hearts and lives.

By the same faith we feel the power of Christ every moment resting upon us, whereby we are enabled to continue in spiritual life, and without which, notwithstanding all our present holiness, we should be devils the next moment. But as long as we retain our faith in Him, we "draw water out of the wells of salvation." Leaning on our beloved, even Christ in us the hope of glory, who dwelleth in our hearts by faith, who likewise is ever interceding for us at the right hand of God, we receive help from Him to think, and speak, and act what is acceptable in His sight. Thus does He "prevent" them that believe, in all their "doings," and further them with His continual help, so that all their designs, conversations and actions are "begun, continued and ended in him." Thus doth He "cleanse the thoughts of their hearts, by the inspiration of His Holy Spirit, that they may perfectly love Him, and worthily magnify His holy name."



Thus it is that, in the children of God, repentance and faith exactly answer each other. By repentance, we feel the sin remaining in our hearts, and cleaving to our words and actions; by faith we receive the power of God in Christ, purifying our hearts, and cleansing our hands. / By repentance we are still sensible that we deserve punishment for all our tempers, and words, and actions; by faith we are conscious, that our Advocate with the Father is continually pleading for us, and thereby continually turning aside all condemnation and punishment from us. By repentance we have an abiding conviction, that there is no help in us; by faith we receive, not only mercy, "but grace to help in" *every* "time of need." Repentance disclaims the very possibility of any other help; faith accepts all the help we stand in need of, from Him that hath all power in heaven and earth. Repentance says: "Without him I can do nothing." Faith says: "I can do all things through Christ strengthening me." Through Him I cannot *only* overcome, but expel, all the enemies of



my soul. Through Him I can "love the Lord my God with all my heart, mind, soul and strength"; yea, and "walk in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of my life."

III. From what has been said, we may easily learn the mischievousness of that opinion that we are *wholly* sanctified when we are justified; that our hearts are then cleansed from all sin. It is true, we are then delivered, as was observed before, from the dominion of outward sin; and, at the same time, the power of inward sin is so broken that we need no longer follow or be led by it; but it is by no means true that inward sin is then totally destroyed; that the root of pride, self-will, anger, love of the world, is then taken out of the heart; or that the carnal mind, and the heart bent to backsliding, are entirely extirpated. And to suppose the contrary, is not, as some may think, an innocent, harmless mistake. No; it does immense harm; it entirely blocks up the way to any farther change; for it is manifest, "They that are whole do not need a phy-



sician, but they that are sick." If, therefore, we think we are quite made whole already, there is no room to seek any farther healing. On this supposition it is absurd to expect a farther deliverance from sin, whether gradual or instantaneous.

On the contrary, a deep conviction that we are not yet whole ; that our hearts are not fully purified ; that there is yet in us a "carnal mind," which is still in its nature "enmity against God" ; that a whole body of sin remains in our heart, weakened indeed, but not destroyed ; shows, beyond a possibility of doubt, the absolute necessity of a farther change.) We allow, that at the very moment of justification, we are *born again* ; in that instant we experience that inward change, "from darkness into marvelous light" ; from the image of the brute and the devil, into the image of God ; from the earthly, sensual, devilish mind, to the mind which was in Christ Jesus. But are we then *entirely* changed ? Are we *wholly* transformed into the image of Him that created us ? Far from it ; we still retain a depth of sin ; and it is the



consciousness of this, which constrains us to groan for a full deliverance, to Him that is mighty to save. Hence it is, that those believers who are not convinced of the deep corruption of their hearts, or but slightly, and as it were notionally convinced, have little concern about *entire sanctification*. They may possibly hold the opinion that such a thing is to be, either at death, or some time, they know not when, before it. But they have no great uneasiness for want of it, and no great hunger or thirst after it. They cannot, until they know themselves better, until they repent in the sense above described, until God unveils the inbred monster's face, and shows them the real state of their souls. Then only, when they feel the burden, will they groan for deliverance from it. Then, and not till then, will they cry out, in the agony of their soul,

“Break off the yoke of inbred sin,  
And fully set my spirit free!  
I cannot rest, till pure within;  
Till I am wholly lost in Thee!”

We may learn from hence, secondly, that a deep conviction of our *demerit*, after



we are accepted, (which in one sense may be termed *guilt*), is absolutely necessary, in order to our seeing the true value of the atoning blood; in order to our feeling that we need this as much after we are justified, as ever we did before. Without this conviction we cannot but account the blood of the covenant *as a common thing*, something of which we have not now any great need, seeing all our past sins are blotted out. Yea, but if both our hearts and lives are thus unclean, there is a kind of guilt which we are contracting every moment, and which, of consequence, would every moment expose us to fresh condemnation, but that

“He ever lives above,  
 For us to intercede,  
 His all-atoning love,  
 His precious blood to plead.”

It is this repentance, and the faith intimately connected with it, which are expressed in those strong lines,

“I sin in every breath I draw,  
 Nor do Thy will, nor keep Thy law,  
 On earth, as angels do above;  
 But still the fountain open stands.



Washes my feet, my heart, my hands,  
'Till I am perfected in love."

We may observe, ~~thirdly~~, a deep conviction of our utter *helplessness*, of our total inability to retain anything we have received, much more to deliver ourselves from the world of iniquity remaining both in our hearts and lives, teaches us truly to live upon Christ by faith, not only as our Priest, but as our King. Hereby we are brought to "magnify him," indeed; "to give him all the glory of his grace"; to make Him a whole Christ, an entire Saviour; and truly to set the crown upon his head. These excellent words, as they have frequently been said, have little or no meaning; but they are fulfilled in a strong and deep sense, when we thus, as it were, go out of ourselves, in order to be swallowed up in Him; when we sink into nothing, that He may be all in all. Then His almighty grace having abolished "every high thing which exalted itself against him," every temper, and thought, and word, and work, "is brought to the obedience of Christ."



## SCRIPTURE WAY OF SALVATION.

**“Ye are saved through faith” (Eph. ii. 8).**

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NOTHING can be more intricate, complex, and hard to be understood, than religion, as it has been often described. And this is not only true concerning the religion of the heathens, even many of the wisest of them, but concerning the religion of those also who were, in some sense, Christians; yea, and men of great name in the Christian world; men who seemed to be pillars thereof. Yet how easy to be understood, how plain and simple a thing is the genuine religion of Jesus Christ; provided only that we take it in its native form, just as it is described in the oracles of God! It is exactly suited, by the wise



Creator and Governor of the world, to the weak understanding and narrow capacity of man in his present state. How observable is this, both with regard to the end it proposes, and the means to attain that end! The end is, in one word, salvation; the means to attain it, faith.

It is easily discerned that these two little words, I mean faith and salvation, include the substance of all the Bible, the marrow, as it were, of the whole Scripture. So much the more should we take all possible care to avoid all mistake concerning them, and to form a true and accurate judgment concerning both the one and the other.

Let us then seriously inquire :

I. What is salvation ?

II. What is that faith whereby we are saved ? And,

III. How are we saved by it ?

And, first, let us inquire: What is salvation ? The salvation which is here spoken of, is not what is frequently understood by that word, the going to heaven,



eternal happiness. It is not the soul's going to paradise, termed by our Lord, "Abraham's bosom." It is not a blessing which lies on the other side death; or, as we usually speak, in the other world. The very words of the text itself put this beyond all question: "ye are saved." It is not something at a distance; it is a present thing; a blessing which, through the free mercy of God, ye are now in possession of. Nay, the words may be rendered, and that with equal propriety, "*Ye have been saved.*" So that the salvation which is here spoken of, might be extended to the entire work of God, from the first dawning of grace in the soul, till it is consummated in glory.

If we take this in its utmost extent, it will include all that is wrought in the soul by what is frequently termed natural conscience, but more properly, preventing grace;—all the drawings of the Father; the desires after God, which, if we yield to them, increase more and more;—all that light wherewith the Son of God "enlighteneth every one that cometh into



the world"; showing every man, "to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with his God;" — all the convictions which His spirit, from time to time, works in every child of man; although, it is true, the generality of men stifle them as soon as possible, and after a while forget, or at least deny, that they ever had them at all.

But we are at present concerned only with that salvation which the apostle is directly speaking of. And this consists of two general parts, justification and sanctification.

Justification is another word for pardon. It is the forgiveness of all our sins; and, what is necessarily implied therein, our acceptance with God. The price whereby this hath been procured for us (commonly termed the meritorious cause of our justification) is the blood and righteousness of Christ, or, to express it a little more clearly, all that Christ hath done and suffered for us, till He "poured out his soul for the transgressors." The immediate effects of justification are, the peace



of God, a "peace that passeth all understanding," and a "rejoicing in hope of the glory of God," "with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

And at the same time that we are justified, yea, in that very moment, sanctification begins. In that instant we are born again, born from above, born of the Spirit, there is a *real* as well as a *relative* change. We are inwardly renewed by the power of God. We feel "the love of God shed abroad in our heart by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us," producing love to all mankind, and more especially to the children of God; expelling the love of the world, the love of pleasure, of ease, of honor, of money; together with pride, anger, self-will, and every other evil temper; in a word, changing the earthly, sensual, devilish mind, into "the mind which was in Christ Jesus."

How naturally do those who experience such a change, imagine that all sin is gone; that it is utterly rooted out of their heart, and has no more any place therein! How



easily do they draw that inference! “I *feel* no sin, therefore, I *have* none; it does not *stir*, therefore, it does not *exist*; it has no *motion*, therefore, it has no *being*.”

But it is seldom long before they are undeceived, finding sin was only suspended, not destroyed. Temptations return, and sin revives; showing it was but stunned before, not dead. They now feel two principles in themselves, plainly contrary to each other; “the flesh lusting against the spirit”; nature opposing the grace of God. They cannot deny that, although they still feel power to believe in Christ, and love God; and, although His “Spirit (still) witnesses with their spirits, that they are children of God,” yet, they feel in themselves sometimes pride or self-will, sometimes anger or unbelief. They find one or more of these frequently *stirring* in their hearts, though not *conquering*; yea, perhaps “thrusting sore at them that they may fall”; but the Lord is their help.

How exactly did Macarius, fourteen



hundred years ago, describe the present experience of the children of God! "The unskillful (or inexperienced), when grace operates, presently imagine they have no more sin. Whereas they that have discretion cannot deny, that even we who have the grace of God may be molested again. For we have often had instances of some among the brethren, who have experienced such grace as to affirm that they had no sin in them; and yet, after all, when they thought themselves entirely freed from it, the corruption that lurked within was stirred up anew, and they were well nigh burned up."

From the time of our being born again, the gradual work of sanctification takes places. We are enabled, "by the spirit, to mortify the deeds of the body," of our evil nature; and as we are more and more dead to sin, we are more and more alive to God. We go on from grace to grace, while we are careful to "abstain from all appearance of evil," and are "zealous of good works," as we have opportunity of doing



good to all men ; while we walk in all His ordinances blameless, therein worshiping Him in spirit and in truth ; while we take up our cross, and deny ourselves every pleasure that does not lead us to God.

It is thus that we wait for entire sanctification ; for a full salvation from all our sins,—from pride, self-will, anger, unbelief ; or, as the apostle expresses it, “go on to perfection.” But what is perfection ? The word has various senses ; here it means perfect love. It is love excluding sin ; love filling the heart, taking up the whole capacity of the soul. It is love “rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, in everything giving thanks.”

II. But what is that faith through which we are saved ? This is the second point to be considered.

Faith, in general, is defined by the apostle in the original: *an evidence, a divine evidence and conviction* [the word means both] *of things not seen* ; not visible, not perceptible either by sight, or by **any**



other of the external senses. It implies both a supernatural *evidence* of God, and of the things of God, a kind of spiritual *light* exhibited to the soul, and a supernatural *sight* or perception thereof. Accordingly the Scripture speaks of God's giving sometimes light, sometimes a power of discerning it. So St. Paul, "God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." And elsewhere the same apostle speaks of "the eyes of [our] understanding being opened." By this two-fold operation of the Holy Spirit, having the eyes of our soul both *opened* and *enlightened*, we see the things which the natural "eye hath not seen, neither hath the ear heard."

We have a prospect of the invisible things of God; we see the *spiritual world*, which is all round about us, and yet no more discerned by our natural faculties, than if it had no being; and we see the *eternal world*; piercing through the veil



which hangs between time and eternity. Clouds and darkness then rest upon it no more, but we already see the glory which shall be revealed.

Taking the word in a more particular sense, faith is a divine *evidence* and *conviction*, not only that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself," but also that Christ loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*. It is by this faith (whether we term it the *essence*, or rather a *property* thereof) that we *receive Christ*; that we receive Him in all His offices, as our Prophet, Priest and King. It is by this, that He is "made of God unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."

"But is this the *faith of assurance* or *faith of adherence*?" The Scripture mentions no such distinction. The apostle says, "There is one faith, and one hope of our calling"; one Christian, saving faith; "as there is one Lord," in whom we believe, and "one God and Father of us all." And it is certain, this necessarily implies



an *assurance* (which is here only another word for *evidence*, it being hard to tell the difference between them) that Christ loved me, and gave Himself for me. For "he that believeth," with the true living faith, "hath the witness in himself"; "The Spirit witnesses with his spirit, that he is a child of God." "Because he is a son, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into his heart, crying Abba, Father"; giving Him assurance that He is so, and a childlike confidence in Him. But let it be observed that, in the very nature of the thing the assurance goes before the confidence. For a man cannot have a childlike confidence in God till he knows he is a child of God. Therefore confidence, trust, reliance, adherence, or whatever else it may be called, is not the first, as some have supposed, but the second branch or act of faith.

It is by this faith we are saved, justified, and sanctified; taking that word in its highest sense. But how are we justified and sanctified by faith? This is our third



head of inquiry. And this being the main point in question, and a point of no ordinary importance, it will not be improper to give it a more distinct and particular consideration.

III. And, first, How are we justified by faith? In what sense is this to be understood? I answer, faith is the condition, and the only condition, of justification. It is the *condition*: none is justified but he that believes; without faith no man is justified. And it is the *only condition*: this alone is sufficient for justification. Everyone that believes is justified, whatever else he has or has not. In other words, no man is justified till he believes; every man when he believes is justified.

“But does not God command us to repent also? Yea, and to ‘bring forth fruits meet for repentance’? To cease, for instance from doing evil, and learn to do well? And is not both the one and the other of the utmost necessity, insomuch that if we willingly neglect either, we cannot reasonably expect to be justified at



all? But if this be so, how can it be said that faith is the only condition of justification?"

God does undoubtedly command us both to repent, and to bring forth fruits meet for repentance; which if we willingly neglect we cannot reasonably expect to be justified at all; therefore both repentance, and fruits meet for repentance, are in some sense necessary to justification. But they are not necessary in the *same sense* with faith, nor in the *same degree*. Not in the *same degree*; for those fruits are not necessary *conditionally*; if there be time and opportunity for them. Otherwise a man may be justified without them, as was the *thief* upon the cross; (if we may call him so; for a late writer has discovered that he was no thief, but a very honest and respectable person!) but he cannot be justified without faith; this is impossible. Likewise, let a man have ever so much repentance, or ever so many of the fruits meet for repentance, yet all this does not at all avail; he is not justified till he be-



lieves. But the moment he believes, with or without those fruits, yea, with more or less repentance, he is justified; not in the *same sense*; for repentance and its fruits are only *remotely* necessary,—necessary in order to faith; whereas faith is *immediately* and *directly* necessary to justification. It remains, that faith is the only condition, which is *immediately* and *proximately* necessary to justification.

“But do you believe we are sanctified by faith? We know you believe that we are justified by faith; but do not you believe, and accordingly teach, that we are sanctified by our works?” So it has been roundly and vehemently affirmed for these five and twenty years; but I have constantly declared just the contrary; and that in all manner of ways. I have continually testified in private and in public, that we are sanctified as well as justified by faith. And indeed the one of those great truths does exceedingly illustrate the other. Exactly as we are justified by faith, so are we sanctified by faith. Faith is the



condition, and the only condition of sanctification, exactly as it is of justification. It is the *condition* ; none is sanctified but he that believes ; without faith no man is sanctified. And it is the *only condition* ; this alone is sufficient for sanctification. Everyone that believes is sanctified, whatever else he has or has not. In other words, no man is sanctified till he believes ; every man when he believes is sanctified.

“But is there not a repentance consequent upon, as well as a repentance previous to, justification ? And is it not incumbent on all that are justified to be ‘zealous of good works’ ? Yea, are not these so necessary, that if a man willingly neglect them he cannot reasonably expect that he shall ever be sanctified in the full sense ; that is, perfected in love ? Nay, can he grow at all in grace, in the loving knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ ? Yea, can he retain the grace which God has already given him ? Can he continue in the faith which he has received, or in the favor of God ? Do not you yourself allow all this,



and continually assert it ? But, if this be so, how can it be said that faith is the only condition of sanctification ? ”

I do allow all this, and continually maintain it as the truth of God. I allow there is a repentance consequent upon, as well as a repentance previous to, justification. It is incumbent on all that are justified to be zealous of good works. And these are so necessary, that if a man willingly neglect them he cannot reasonably expect that he shall ever be sanctified ; he cannot grow in grace, in the image of God, the mind which was in Christ Jesus ; nay, he cannot retain the grace he has received, he cannot continue in faith, or in the favor of God.

What is the inference we must draw herefrom ? Why, that both repentance, rightly understood, and the practice of all good works, works of piety, as well as works of mercy, (now properly so called, since they spring from faith) are in some sense necessary to sanctification.

I say repentance rightly understood ;



for this must not be confounded with the former repentance. The repentance consequent upon justification, is widely different from that which is antecedent to it. This implies no guilt, no sense of condemnation, no consciousness of the wrath of God. It does not suppose any doubt of the favor of God, or any "fear that ~~hath~~ torment." It is properly a conviction, wrought by the Holy Ghost, of the *sin* which still *remains* in our heart; of the *phronama sarkos*, the carnal mind, which "does still *remain*, (as our church speaks) even in them that are regenerate"; although it does no longer *reign*, it has not now dominion over them. It is a conviction of our proneness to evil, of a heart bent to backsliding, of the still continuing tendency of the flesh to lust against the Spirit. Sometimes, unless we continually watch and pray, it lusteth to pride, sometimes to anger, sometimes to love of the world, love of honor, or love of pleasure more than of God. It is a conviction of the tendency of our heart to self-will, to



atheism or idolatry, and, above all, to unbelief, whereby, in a thousand ways, and under a thousand pretences, we are ever departing, more or less, from the living God.

With this conviction of the sin remaining in our hearts, there is joined a clear conviction of the sin remaining in our lives; still *cleaving* to all our words and actions. In the best of these we now discern a mixture of evil, either in the spirit, the matter, or the manner of them, something that could not endure the righteous judgment of God, were He extreme to mark what is done amiss. Where we least suspected it, we find a taint of pride or self-will, of unbelief or idolatry; so that we are now more ashamed of our best duties than formerly of our worst sins; and hence we cannot but feel, that these are so far from having anything meritorious in them, yea, so far from being able to stand in sight of the divine justice, that for those also we should be guilty before God, were it not for the blood of the covenant.



Experience shows that, together with the conviction of sin *remaining* in our hearts, and *cleaving* to all our words and actions, as well as the guilt which on account thereof we should incur, were we not continually sprinkled with the atoning blood, one thing more is implied in this repentance, viz: a conviction of our helplessness, of our utter inability to think one good thought, or to form one good desire; and much more to speak one word aright, or to perform one good action, but through His free, almighty grace, first preventing us, and then accompanying us every moment.

“But what good works are those, the practice of which you affirm to be necessary to sanctification?” First, all works of piety, such as public prayer, family prayer, and praying in our closet, receiving the supper of the Lord, searching the Scriptures, by hearing, reading, meditating, and using such a measure of fasting or abstinence as our bodily health allows.

Secondly, all works of mercy, whether they relate to the bodies or souls of men,



such as feeding the hungry, clothing, the naked, entertaining the stranger, visiting those that are in prison, or sick or variously afflicted; such as the endeavoring to instruct the ignorant to awaken the stupid sinner, to quicken the lukewarm, to confirm the wavering, to comfort the feeble-minded, to succor the tempted, or contribute in any manner to the saving of souls from death. This is the repentance, and these the "fruits meet for repentance," which are necessary to full sanctification. This is the way wherein God hath appointed His children to wait for complete salvation.

Hence may appear the extreme mischievousness of that seemingly innocent opinion: that there is no sin in a believer; that all sin is destroyed, root and branch, the moment a man is justified. By totally preventing that repentance, it quite blocks up the way to sanctification; there is no place for repentance in him who believes there is no sin either in his life or heart; consequently, there is no place for his



being perfected in love, to which that repentance is indispensably necessary.

Hence, it may likewise appear that there is no possible danger in *thus* expecting full salvation. For suppose we were mistaken; suppose no such blessing ever was, or can be attained; yet we lose nothing; nay, that very expectation quickens us in using all the talents which God has given us; yea, in improving them all; so that when our Lord cometh, He will receive His own with increase.

But to return. Though it be allowed that both this repentance and its fruits are necessary to full salvation, yet they are not necessary either in the same sense with faith, or in the same degree; not in the *same degree*;—for these fruits are necessary *conditionally*, if there be time and opportunity for them; otherwise, a man may be sanctified without them. But he cannot be sanctified without faith. Likewise, let a man have ever so much of this repentance, or ever so many good works, yet all this does not avail; he is



not sanctified until he believes; but the moment he believes, with, or without those fruits, yea, with more or less of this repentance, he is sanctified. Not in the *same sense*; — for this repentance and these fruits are only *remotely* necessary, — necessary in order to the continuance of his faith, as well as the increase of it; whereas faith is *immediately* and *directly* necessary to sanctification. It remains, that faith is the only condition, which is *immediately* and *proximately* necessary to sanctification.

“But what is that faith whereby we are sanctified, saved from sin, and perfected in love?” It is a divine evidence and conviction, first, that God hath promised it in the Holy Scripture. Till we are thoroughly satisfied of this, there is no moving one step farther. And one would imagine there needed not one word more to satisfy a reasonable man of this than the ancient promise, “Then will I circumcise thy heart and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy



heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” How clearly does this express the being perfected in love! how strongly imply the being saved from all sin! For as long as love takes up the whole heart, what room is there for sin therein?

It is a divine evidence and conviction, secondly, that what God hath promised He is able to perform. Admitting, therefore, that “with men it is impossible” to “bring a clean thing out of an unclean,” to purify the heart from all sin, and to fill it with all holiness; yet this creates no difficulty in the case, seeing “with God all things are possible.” And surely no one ever imagined it was possible to any power less than that of the Almighty! But if God speaks, it shall be done. God saith, “Let there be light; and there [is] light!”

It is, thirdly, a divine evidence and conviction that He is able and willing to do it now. And why not? Is not a moment to Him the same as a thousand years? He cannot want more time to accomplish whatever is His will. And He cannot



want or stay for any more *worthiness* or *fitness* in the persons He is pleased to honor. We may therefore boldly say, at any one point of time, "Now is the day of salvation!" "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." "Behold, all things are now ready, come unto the marriage!"

To this confidence, that God is both able and willing to sanctify us now, there needs to be added one thing more,—a divine evidence and conviction that He doeth it. In that hour it is done; God says to the inmost soul, "According to thy faith be it unto thee!" Then the soul is pure from every spot of sin; it is clean "from all unrighteousness." The believer then experiences the deep meaning of those solemn words, "If we walk in the light as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

"But does God work this great work in the soul gradually or instantaneously?" Perhaps it may be gradually wrought in



some; I mean in this sense: they do not advert to the particular moment wherein sin ceases to be. But it is infinitely desirable, were it the will of God, that it should be done instantaneously; that the Lord should destroy sin "by the breath of his mouth," in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. And so He generally does; a plain fact, of which there is evidence enough to satisfy any unprejudiced person. *Thou*, therefore, look for it every moment! Look for it in the way above described; in all those *good works* whereunto thou art "created anew in Christ Jesus." There is then no danger; you can be no worse, if you are no better, for that expectation. For were you to be disappointed of your hope, still you lose nothing. But you shall not be disappointed of your hope; it will come, and will not tarry. Look for it, then, every day, every hour, every moment! Why not this hour, this moment? Certainly you may look for it *now*, if you believe it is by faith. And by



this token, you may surely know whether you seek it by faith or by works. If by works, you want something to be done *first, before* you are sanctified. You think, I must *be* or *do* thus or thus. Then you are seeking it by works unto this day. If you are seeking it by faith, you may expect it *as you are*; and if as you are, then expect it *now*. It is of importance to observe that there is an inseparable connection between these three points, expect it *by faith*, expect it *as you are*, expect it *now*! To deny one of them, is to deny them all. To allow one, is to allow them all. Do *you* believe we are sanctified by faith? Be true, then, to your principle; and look for the blessing just as you are, neither better nor worse; as a poor sinner that has still nothing to pay, nothing to plead, but Christ *died*. And if you look for it as you are, then expect it *now*. Stay for nothing; why should you? Christ is ready; and He is all you want. He is waiting for you; He



is at the door ! Let your inmost soul cry  
out : —

“Come in, come in, thou heavenly guest!  
Nor hence again remove;  
But sup with me, and let the feast  
Be everlasting love.”







## PATIENCE.

“Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing” (James i. 4).

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“MY brethren,” says the apostle in the preceding verse, “count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.” At first view this may appear a strange direction, seeing most temptations are, “for the present, not joyous, but grievous.” Nevertheless ye know by your own experience, that “the trial of your faith worketh patience”; and if patience have its proper work, ye shall be “perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”

It is not to any particular person, or church, that the apostle gives this instruction; but to all who are partakers of like precious faith, and are seeking after that common salvation. For as long as any of



us are upon earth, we are in the region of temptation. He who came into the world to save His people from their sins did not come to save them from temptation. He Himself "knew no sin," yet while He was in this vale of tears, "he suffered, being tempted"; and herein also "left us an example, that we should tread in his steps." We are liable to a thousand temptations, from the corruptible body variously affecting the soul. The soul itself encompassed as it is with infirmities, exposes us to ten thousand more. And how many are the temptations which we meet with even from the good men (such at least they are in part, in their general character) with whom we are called to converse from day to day! Yet what are these to the temptations we may expect to meet with from an evil world?—seeing we all, in effect, "dwell with Mesech, and have our habitation in the tents of Kedar." Add to this, that the most dangerous of our enemies are not those that assault us openly. No,



“Angels our march oppose,  
Who still in strength excel,  
Our secret, sworn eternal foes,  
Countless, invisible.”

For is not our “adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion,” with all his infernal legions, still “going about seeking whom he may devour”? This is the case with all the children of men. Yea, and with all the children of God, as long as they sojourn in this strange land. Therefore, if we do not willfully and carelessly rush into them, yet we shall surely “fall into divers temptations”; temptations innumerable as the stars of heaven; and those varied and complicated a thousand ways. But instead of counting this a loss, as unbelievers would do, “count it all joy; knowing that the trial of your faith,” even when it is “tried as by fire,” “worketh patience.” But let “patience have her perfect work, and ye shall be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”

But what is *patience*? We do not now speak of a heathen virtue; neither of a



natural indolence; but of a gracious temper, wrought in the heart of a believer by the power of the Holy Ghost. It is a disposition to suffer whatever pleases God, in the manner, and for the time that pleases Him. We thereby hold the middle way, neither *despising* our sufferings, *making little* of them, passing over them lightly, as if they were owing to chance, or second causes; nor, on the other hand, *affected too much, unnerved, dissolved, sinking under them*. We may observe, the proper object of patience is suffering, either in body or mind. Patience does not imply the not *feeling* this; it is not apathy or insensibility. It is at the utmost distance from stoical stupidity; yea, at an equal distance from fretfulness or dejection. The patient believer is preserved from falling into either of these extremes, by considering who is the author of all his suffering. Even God his Father — what is the *motive* of His *giving us* to suffer? Not so properly His justice as His love; and what is the end of it? Our “profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness.”



Very nearly related to patience is *meekness*; if it be not rather a species of it. For may it not be defined, patience of injuries, particularly affronts, reproach, or unjust censure? This teaches not to return evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing. Our blessed Lord Himself seems to place peculiar value upon this temper. This He peculiarly calls us to learn of him, if we would find rest for our souls.

But what may we understand by the *work of patience*? "Let patience have her perfect work." It seems to mean, let it have its full fruit or effect. And what is the fruit which the Spirit of God is accustomed to produce hereby, in the heart of a believer? One immediate fruit of patience is peace; a sweet tranquility of mind; a serenity of spirit, which can never be found unless where patience reigns. And this peace often rises into joy. Even in the midst of various temptations, those that are enabled "in patience to possess their souls," can witness, not only quiet-



ness of spirit, but triumph and exultation.  
This both

“Lays the rough paths of peevish nature even,  
And opens in each breast a little heaven.”

How lively is the account which the Apostle Peter gives, not only of the peace and joy, but of the hope and love which God works in those patient sufferers, “who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation”! Indeed he appears herein to have an eye to this very passage of St. James: “Though ye are grieved for a season with manifold temptations, that the trial of your faith [the same expression which was used by St. James] may be found to praise, and honor, and glory, at the revelation of Jesus Christ: whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” See here the peace, the joy and the love which, through the mighty power of God, are the fruit or “work of patience!”

And as peace, hope, joy and love are the



fruits of patience, both springing from, and confirmed by it, so is also rational, genuine *courage*, which indeed cannot subsist without patience. The brutal courage, or rather fierceness, of a lion, may probably spring from impatience; but true fortitude, the courage of a man, springs from just the contrary temper. Christian *zeal* is likewise confirmed and increased by patience, and so is *activity* in every good work; the same Spirit inciting us to be

“Patient in bearing ill and doing well,”  
making us equally willing to do and suffer the whole will of God.

But what is the *perfect work* of patience? Is it anything less than the “perfect love of God,” constraining us to love every soul of man, “even as Christ loved us”? Is it not the whole of religion, the whole “mind which was also in Christ Jesus”? Is it not “the renewal of our soul in the image of God, after the likeness of him that created us”? And is not the fruit of this the constant resignation of ourselves, body and spirit, to God; entirely giving up all we are, all



we have, and all we love, as a holy sacrifice, acceptable unto God through the Son of His love? It seems this is "the perfect work of patience," consequent upon the trial of our faith.

But how does this work differ from that gracious work which is wrought in every believer, when he first finds redemption in the blood of Jesus, even the remission of his sins? Many persons that are not only upright of heart, but that fear, nay, and love God, have not spoken warily upon this head, not according to the oracles of God. They have spoken of the work of sanctification, taking the word in its full sense, as if it were quite of another kind, as if it differed entirely from that which is wrought in justification. But this is a great and dangerous mistake, and has a natural tendency to make us undervalue that glorious work of God, which was wrought in us when we were justified; whereas in that moment when we are justified freely by His grace, when we are accepted through the beloved, we are born



again, born from above, born of the Spirit. And there is as great a change wrought in our souls, when we are born of the Spirit, as was wrought in our bodies when we were born of a woman. There is, in that hour, a general change from inward sinfulness, to inward holiness. The love of the creature is changed to the love of the Creator; the love of the world into the love of God. Earthly desire, the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life, are, in that instant, changed by the mighty power of God, into heavenly desires. The whirlwind of our will is stopped in its mad career, and sinks down into the will of God. Pride and haughtiness subside into lowliness of heart; as do anger, with all turbulent and unruly passions, into calmness, meekness and gentleness. In a word, the earthly, sensual, devilish mind, gives place to the "mind that was in Christ Jesus."

Well, but what more than this can be implied in entire sanctification? It does not imply any new kind of holiness; let



no man imagine this. From the moment we are justified, till we give up our spirits to God, love is the fulfilling of the law, of the whole evangelical law, which took the place of the Adamic law when the first promise of "the seed of the woman" was made. Love is the sum of Christian sanctification; it is the one *kind* of holiness which is found only in various *degrees*, in the believers who are distinguished by St. John into "little children, young men, and fathers." The difference between one and the other, properly lies in the degree of love. And herein there is as great a difference in the spiritual as in the natural sense, between fathers, young men, and babes.

Every one that is born of God, though he be as yet only a "babe in Christ," has the love of God in his heart; the love of his neighbor; together with lowliness, meekness, and resignation. But all of these are then in a low degree, in proportion to the degree of his faith. The faith of a babe in Christ is weak, generally



mingled with doubts or fears ; with doubts, whether he has not deceived himself ; or fear, that he shall not endure to the end. And if, in order to prevent those perplexing doubts, or to remove those tormenting fears, he catches hold of the opinion that a true believer cannot make shipwreck of the faith, experience will sooner or later show, that it is merely the staff of a broken reed, which will be so far from sustaining him, that it will only enter into his hand and pierce it. But to return. In the same proportion as he grows in faith, he grows in holiness ; he increases in love, lowliness, meekness, in every part of the image of God ; till it pleases God, after he is thoroughly convinced of inbred sin, of the total corruption of his nature, to take it all away ; to purify his heart, and cleanse him from all unrighteousness ; to fulfill that promise which He made first to His ancient people, and in them to the Israel of God in all ages : “ I will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul.”



It is not easy to conceive what a difference there is between that which he experiences now, and that which he experienced before. Till this universal change was wrought in his soul, all his holiness was *mixed*. He was humble, but not entirely; his humility was mixed with pride; he was meek, but his meekness was frequently interrupted by anger, or some uneasy and turbulent passion. His love of God was frequently dampened by the love of some creature; the love of his neighbor, by evil surmisings, or some thought, if not temper, contrary to love. His will was not wholly melted down into the will of God; but although in general he could say, I come, "not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me"; yet now and then, nature rebelled, and he could not clearly say, "Lòrd, not as I will, but as thou wilt." His whole soul is now consistent with itself; there is no jarring string. All his passions flow in a continual stream, with an even tenor, to God. To him that is entered into his rest you may truly say,—



“Calm thou ever art within,  
All unruffled, all serene.”

There is no mixture of any contrary affections ; all is peace and harmony after. Being filled with love, there is no more interruption of it, than of the beating of his heart ; and continual love bringing continual joy in the Lord, he rejoices evermore. He converses continually with the God whom he loves, unto whom, in everything, he gives thanks. And as he now loves God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind, and with all his strength, so Jesus now reigns alone in his heart, the Lord of every motion there.

But it may be inquired, in what manner does God work this entire, this universal change in the soul of a believer, — this strange work, which so many will not believe, though we declare it unto them ? Does He work it gradually, by slow degrees ; or instantaneously, in a moment ? How many are the disputes upon this head, even among the children of God ! And



so there will be, after all that ever was, or ever can be said upon it. For many will still say, with the famous Jew, "Thou shalt not persuade me, though thou dost persuade me." And they will be the more resolute herein, because the Scriptures are silent upon the subject; because the point is not determined, at least not in express terms, in any part of the oracles of God. Every man, therefore, may abound in his own sense, provided he will allow the same liberty to his neighbor; provided he will not be angry at those who differ from his opinion, nor entertain hard thoughts concerning them. Permit me, likewise, to add one thing more: be the change instantaneous or gradual, see that you never rest till it is wrought in your own soul, if you desire to dwell with God in glory.

This premised, in order to throw what light I can upon this interesting question, I will simply relate what I have seen myself in the course of many years. Four or five and forty years ago, when I had no distinct views of what the apostle meant



by exhorting us to "leave the principle of the doctrine of Christ, and go on to perfection," two or three persons in London, whom I knew to be truly sincere, desired to give me an account of their experience. It appeared exceeding strange, being different from any that I had heard before, but exactly similar to the preceding account of entire sanctification. The next year, two or three more persons at Bristol, and two or three in Kingswood, coming to me severally, gave me exactly the same account of their experience. A few years after, I desired all those in London who made the same profession, to come to me all together at the Foundery, that I might be thoroughly satisfied. I desired that man of God, Thomas Walsh, to give us the meeting there. When we met, first one of us, and then the other, asked them the most searching questions we could devise. They answered every one without hesitation, and with the utmost simplicity, so that we were fully persuaded they did not deceive themselves. In the years



1759, 1760, 1761, and 1762, their numbers multiplied exceedingly, not only in London and Bristol, but in various parts of Ireland, as well as England. Not trusting to the testimony of others, I carefully examined most of these myself; and in London alone, I found six hundred and fifty-two members of our society, who were exceeding clear in their experience, and of whose testimony I could see no reason to doubt. I believe no year has passed since that time, wherein God has not wrought the same work in many others; but sometimes in one part of England or Ireland, sometimes in another, — as “the wind bloweth where it listeth,” — and every one of these (after the most careful inquiry, I have not found one exception either in Great Britain or Ireland) has declared that his deliverance from sin was *instantaneous*; that the change was wrought in a moment. Had half of these, or one third, or one in twenty, declared it was *gradually* wrought in *them*, I should have believed this, with regard to *them*, and thought that *some*



were gradually sanctified and some instantaneously. But as I have not found, in so long a space of time, a single person speaking thus ; as all who believe they are sanctified, declare with one voice that the change was wrought in a moment, I cannot but believe that sanctification is, commonly, if not always, an *instantaneous* work.

But however that question be decided, whether sanctification, in the full sense of the word, be wrought instantaneously or gradually, how may we attain to it ? “What shall *we* do,” said the Jews to our Lord, “that we may work the works of God ?” His answer will suit those that ask, what shall we do, that this work of God may be wrought in us ? “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.” On this one work all the others depend. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and all His wisdom, and power, and faithfulness, are engaged on thy side. In this, as in all other instances, “by grace we are saved through faith.” Sanctifica-



tion, too, "is not of works, lest any man should boast." "It is the gift of God," and is to be received by plain, simple faith. Suppose you are now laboring to "abstain from all appearance of evil," "zealous of good works," and walking diligently and carefully in all the ordinances of God; there is then only one point remaining, the voice of God to your soul is, "Believe and be saved." First, believe that God has *promised* to save you from all sin, and to fill you with all holiness; secondly, believe that He is *able* thus "to save to the uttermost all that come unto God, through him"; thirdly, believe that He is *willing*, as well as able, to save *you* to the uttermost, to purify you from all sin, and fill up all your heart with love. Believe, fourthly, that He is not only able, but willing to do it *now*! Not when you come to die; not at any distant time; not to-morrow, but *to-day*. He will then enable you to believe *it is done*, according to His Word; and then patience shall have its "perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing."



Ye shall then be perfect. The apostle seems to mean by this expression, ye shall be wholly delivered from every evil work; from every evil word; from every sinful thought; yea, from every evil desire, passion, temper; from all inbred corruption, from all remains of the carnal mind, from the body of sin; and ye shall be renewed in the spirit of your mind, in every right temper, after the image of Him that created you, in righteousness and true holiness. Ye shall be *entire*. This seems to refer, not so much to the kind, as to the degree of holiness, as if he had said, "Ye shall enjoy as high a degree of holiness as is consistent with your present state of pilgrimage," and ye shall *want nothing*; the Lord being your Shepherd, your Father, your Redeemer, your Sanctifier, your God, and your All, will feed you with the bread of heaven, and give you meat enough. He will lead you forth beside the waters of comfort, and keep you every moment; so that loving Him with all your heart (which is



the sum of all perfection), you will "re-  
joice evermore, pray without ceasing, and  
in everything give thanks," till "an abun-  
dant entrance is ministered unto you into  
his everlasting kingdom!"



## PERFECTION.

“Let us go on unto perfection” (Heb. vi. 1).

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THE whole sentence runs thus: “Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection: not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God,” which he had just before termed, “the first principles of the oracles of God,” and “meat fit for babes”; for such as have just tasted that the Lord is gracious.

That the doing of this is a point of the utmost importance, the apostle intimates in the next words: “This will we do, if God permit. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come, and have



fallen away, to renew them again to repentance." As if he had said, if we do not "go on to perfection," we are in the utmost danger of "falling away." And if we do fall away, it is "impossible [that is, exceeding hard] to renew us again to repentance."

In order to make this very important Scripture as easy to be understood as possible, I shall endeavor,

- I. To show what perfection is.
- II. To answer some objections to it, and
- III. To expostulate a little with the opposers of it.

I. I will endeavor to show what perfection is.

And first, I do not conceive the perfection here spoken of to be the perfection of angels. As those glorious beings never "left their first estate," never declined from their original perfection, all their native faculties are unimpaired; their understanding, in particular, is still a lamp of light; their apprehension of all things clear and distinct, and their judgment always true. Hence, though their knowl-



edge is limited (for they are creatures), though they are ignorant of innumerable things, yet they are not liable to mistake; their knowledge is perfect in its kind. And as their affections are all constantly guided by their unerring understanding, so that all their actions are suitable thereto, so they do, every moment, not their own will, but the good and acceptable will of God. Therefore it is not possible for man, whose understanding is darkened, to whom mistake is as natural as ignorance, who cannot think at all, but by the mediation of organs which are weakened and depraved, like the other parts of his corruptible body; it is not possible, I say, for man always to think right, to apprehend things distinctly, and to judge truly of them. In consequence thereof, his affections, depending on his understanding, are variously disordered; and his words and actions are influenced, more or less, by the disorder both of his understanding and affections. It follows, that no man, while in the body, can possibly attain to angelic perfection.



Neither can any man, while he is in a corruptible body, attain to Adamic perfection. Adam, before his fall, was undoubtedly as pure, as free from sin, as even the holy angels. In like manner, his understanding was as clear as theirs, and his affections as regular. In virtue of this, as he always judged right, so he was able always to speak and act right. But since man rebelled against God, the case is widely different with him. He is no longer able to avoid falling into innumerable mistakes; consequently, he cannot always avoid wrong affections; neither can he always think, speak, and act right. Therefore man, in his present state, can no more attain Adamic than angelic perfection.

The highest perfection which man can attain, while the soul dwells in the body, does not exclude ignorance, and error, and a thousand other infirmities. Now from wrong judgments, wrong words and actions will often necessarily flow; and, in some cases, wrong affections also may spring from the same source. I may judge wrong of you; I may think more or less highly



of you than I ought to think; and this mistake in my judgment may not only occasion something wrong in my behavior, but it may have a still deeper effect; it may occasion something wrong in my affection. From a wrong apprehension, I may love and esteem you either more or less than I ought. Nor can I be freed from a liableness to such a mistake, while I remain in a corruptible body. A thousand infirmities, in consequence of this, will attend my spirit, till it returns to God who gave it. And, in numberless instances, it comes short of doing the will of God, as Adam did in paradise. Hence the best of men may say from the heart:—

“Every moment, Lord, I need  
The merit of Thy death,”

for innumerable violations of the Adamic as well as the angelic law. It is well, therefore, for us, that we are not now under these, but under the law of love. “Love is [now] the fulfilling of the law,” which is given to fallen man. This is now, with respect to us, “the perfect law.” But even against this, through the present



weakness of our understanding, we are continually liable to transgress. Therefore, every man living needs the blood of atonement, or he could not stand before God.

What is then the perfection of which man is capable, while he dwells in a corruptible body? It is the complying with that kind command, "My son, give me thy heart." It is the loving the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind. This is the sum of Christian perfection; it is all comprised in that one word, love. The first branch of it is the love of God; and as he that loves God loves his brother also, it is inseparably connected with the second, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Thou shalt love every man as thy own soul, as Christ loved us. "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets"; these contain the whole of Christian perfection.

Another view of this is given us, in those words of the great apostle, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in



Christ Jesus." For although this immediately and directly refers to the humility of our Lord, yet it may be taken in a far more extensive sense, so as to include the whole disposition of his mind, all his affections, all his tempers, both towards God and man. Now it is certain that as there was no evil affection in him, so no good affection or temper was wanting. So that "whatsoever things are holy, whatsoever things are lovely," are all included in "the mind that was in Christ Jesus."

St. Paul, when writing to the Galatians, places perfection in yet another view. It is the one undivided *fruit of the Spirit*, which he describes thus : "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity," (so the word should be translated here), "meekness, temperance." What a glorious constellation of grace is here ! Now suppose all these things to be knit together in one, to be united together in the soul of a believer, this is Christian perfection.

Again : He writes to the Christians at Ephesus, of "putting on the new man,



which is created after God in righteousness and true holiness"; and to the Collossians, of "the new man renewed after the image of him that created him"; plainly referring to the words in Genesis, chap. i. 27, "So God created man in his own image." Now the moral image of God consists (as the apostle observes) "in righteousness and true holiness." By sin this is totally destroyed. And we never can recover it, till we are "created anew in Christ Jesus." And this is perfection.

St. Peter expresses it in a still different manner, though to the same effect. "As he that hath called you is holy, so be ye holy, in all manner of conversation" (1 Peter i. 15). According to this apostle, then, perfection is another name for universal holiness; inward and outward righteousness; holiness of life arising from holiness of heart.

If any expressions can be stronger than these, they are those of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, 1 Epistle v. 23: "The God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may the whole of you, the spirit, the soul,



and the body, [this is the literal translation], be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

We cannot show this sanctification in a more excellent way, than by complying with that exhortation of the apostle: "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies," [yourselves, your souls and bodies; a part put for the whole, by a common figure of speech,] "a living sacrifice unto God"; to whom ye were consecrated many years ago in baptism. When what was then devoted is actually presented to God, then is the man of God perfect.

To the same effect St. Peter says, 1 Epistle ii. 5: "Ye are a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ." But what sacrifices shall we offer now, seeing the Jewish dispensation is at an end? If you have truly presented yourselves to God, you offer up to Him continually all your thoughts, and words, and actions through the Son of His love, as a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.



Thus you experience that He whose name is called Jesus, does not bear that name in vain; that He does, in fact, "save his people from their sins"; the root, as well as the branches. And this salvation from sin, from all sin, is another description of perfection, though indeed it expresses only the least, the lowest branch of it, only the negative part of the great salvation.

II. I propose, in the second place, to answer some objections to this Scriptural account of perfection.

One common objection to it is, that there is no promise of it in the Word of God. If this were so, we must give it up; we should have no foundation to build upon; for the promises of God are the only sure foundation of our hope. But surely there is a very clear and full promise, that we shall all love the Lord our God with all our hearts. So we read Deut. xxx. 6: "Then will I circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul." Equally express is the word of our



Lord, which is no less a promise, though in the form of a command, Matt. xxii. 37 : "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." No words can be more strong than these ; no promise can be more express. In like manner, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," is as express a promise as a command.

And, indeed, that general and unlimited promise, which runs through the whole gospel dispensation ; I will put my laws in their minds, and write them in their hearts ; turns all the commands into promises ; and consequently that among the rest, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." The command here is equivalent to a promise, and gives us full reason to expect, that He will work in us what He requires of us.

With regard to the fruit of the Spirit, the apostle in affirming, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, temperance," does, in effect, affirm that the Holy Spirit actually works love, and these



other tempers, in those that are led by Him. So that here, also, we have firm ground to tread upon; this Scripture likewise being equivalent to a promise, and assuring us, that all these shall be wrought in us, provided we are led by the Spirit.

And when the apostle says to the Ephesians, chap. iv. 21-24: "Ye have been taught, as the truth is in Jesus," to be "renewed in the spirit of your mind, and to put on the new man, which is created after God, that is after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness"; He leaves us no room to doubt, but God will thus "renew us in the spirit of our mind" and "create us anew" in the image of God, wherein we were at first created; otherwise it could not be said that this is "the truth as it is in Jesus."

The command of God given by St. Peter: "Be ye holy, as he that hath called you is holy, in all manner of conversation," implies a promise that we shall be thus holy, if we are not wanting to ourselves. Nothing can be wanting on God's part; as He has called us to holiness, He is un-



doubtedly willing, as well as able, to work this holiness in us. For He cannot mock His helpless creatures, calling us to receive what He never intends to give. That He does call us thereto is undeniable; therefore, He will give it, if we are not disobedient to the heavenly calling.

The prayer of St. Paul for the Thessalonians, that God would "sanctify them throughout," and "that the whole of them, the spirit, the soul and the body, might be preserved blameless," will undoubtedly be heard in behalf of all the children of God, as well as those at Thessalonica. Hereby, therefore, all Christians are encouraged to expect the same blessing from "the God of peace," namely, that they also shall be "sanctified throughout, in spirit, soul and body"; and that "the whole of them shall be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

But the great question is, whether there is any promise in Scripture that we shall be *saved from sin*? Undoubtedly there is. Such is that promise, Psalm cxxx. 8, "He shall redeem Israel from all his sins";



exactly answerable to those words of the angel, "He shall save his people from their sins." And surely "he is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God through him." Such is that glorious promise given through the prophet Ezekiel, chap. xxxvi. 25-27: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Such (to mention no more) is that pronounced by Zachariah, Luke i. 73-75: "The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, [and such, doubtless, are all our sins] to serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." The last part of this promise is



peculiarly worthy of our observation. Lest any should say, "True, we shall be saved from our sins when we die; that clause is remarkably added, as if on purpose to obviate this pretence, *all the days of our life*. With what modesty, then, can any one affirm, "that none shall enjoy this liberty *till death*"?

"But," says one, "this cannot be the meaning of the words, for the thing is impossible." It is impossible to men; but the things impossible with man, are possible with God. "Nay, but this is impossible in its own nature; for it implies a contradiction, that a man should be saved from all sin, while he is in a sinful body."

There is a great deal of force in this objection. And perhaps we must allow most of what you contend for. We have already allowed, that while we are in the body, we cannot be wholly free from mistake. Notwithstanding all our care, we shall still be liable to judge wrong in many instances. And a mistake in judgment will very frequently occasion a mistake in practice. Nay, a wrong judgment may occasion



something in the temper or passions which is not strictly right. It may occasion needless fear, or ill-grounded hope; unreasonable love, or unreasonable aversion. But all this is no way inconsistent with the perfection above described.

You say, "Yes, it is inconsistent with the last article; it cannot consist with salvation from sin." I answer, it will perfectly well consist with salvation from sin, according to that definition of sin, (which I apprehend to be the Scriptural definition of it) *a voluntary transgression of a known law*. "Nay, but all transgressions of the law of God, whether voluntary or involuntary, are sin; for St John says, *All sin is a transgression of the law*." True, but he does not say, *All transgression of the law is sin*. This I deny; let him prove it that can.

To say the truth, this is a mere strife of words. You say, none is saved from sin in *your* sense of the word; but I do not admit of that sense, because the word is never so taken in Scripture. And you cannot destroy the possibility of being



saved from sin, in *my* sense of the word. And this is the sense wherein **the** word sin is over and over taken in the Scripture.

“But surely we cannot be saved from sin while we dwell in a *sinful body*.” A *sinful body*? I pray observe how deeply ambiguous, how equivocal this expression is! But there is no authority for it in Scripture; the word *sinful body* is never found there. And as it is totally unscriptural, so it is palpably absurd. For no *body*, or matter of any kind, can be *sinful*; spirits alone are capable of sin. Pray, in what part of the body should sin lodge? It cannot lodge in the skin, nor in the muscles, or nerves, or veins, or arteries; it cannot be in the bones, any more than in the hair or nails. Only the soul can be the seat of sin.

“But does not St. Paul himself say, ‘They that are in the flesh cannot please God’?” I am afraid the sound of these words has deceived many unwary souls; who have been told these words, *they that are in the flesh*, mean the same as they that are in the body. No; nothing less.



*The flesh*, in this text, no more means the body than it does the soul. Abel, Enoch, Abraham; yea, all that cloud of witnesses recited by St. Paul in the eleventh of the Hebrews, did actually please God while they were in the body, as He himself testifies. The expression, therefore, here means neither more nor less than they that are unbelievers; they that are in their natural state; they that are without God in the world.

But let us attend to the reason of the thing. Why cannot the Almighty sanctify the soul while it is in the body? Cannot He sanctify *you* while you are in this house, as well as in the open air? Can the walls of brick or stone hinder Him? No more can these walls of flesh and blood hinder Him a moment from sanctifying you throughout. He can just as easily save you from all sin in the body, as out of the body.

“But has He promised thus to save us from sin while we are in the body?” Undoubtedly He has; for a promise is implied in every commandment of God;



consequently in that, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." For this and every other commandment is given, not to the dead, but to the living. It is expressed in the words above recited, that we should "walk in holiness before him all the days of our life."

I have dwelt the longer on this, because it is the grand argument of those that oppose salvation from sin; and also, because it has not been so frequently and so fully answered; whereas the arguments taken from Scripture have been answered a hundred times over.

But a still more plausible objection remains, taken from experience; which is, that "there are no living witnesses of this salvation from sin." In answer to this, I allow that there are not many. Even in this sense, there are *not many fathers*. Such is our hardness of heart; such our slowness to believe what both the prophets and apostles have spoken, that there are few, exceeding few, true witnesses of the great salvation.



I allow that there are false witnesses, who either deceive their own souls, and speak of the things they know not, or "speak lies in hypocrisy." And I have frequently wondered that we have not more of both sorts. It is nothing strange that men of warm imaginations should deceive themselves in this matter. Many do the same with regard to justification; they imagine they are justified, and are not. But though many imagine it falsely, yet there are some that are truly justified. And thus, though many imagine they are sanctified, and are not, yet there are some that are really sanctified.

I allow that some who once enjoyed full salvation, have now totally lost it. They once walked in glorious liberty, giving God their whole heart, rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, and in everything giving thanks. But it is past. They now are shorn of their strength, and become like other men. Yet, perhaps, they do not give up their confidence; they still have a sense of His pardoning love. But even this is frequently assaulted by doubts



and fears, so that they hold it with a trembling hand.

“Nay, this,” say some pious and sensible men, “is the very thing which we contend for. We grant it may please God to make some of His children, for a time, unspeakably holy and happy. We will not deny that they may enjoy all the holiness and happiness which you speak of. But it is only *for a time*; God never designed that it should continue to their lives’ end. Consequently, sin is only suspended; it is not destroyed.”

This you affirm. But it is a thing of so deep importance, that it cannot be allowed without clear and cogent proof. And where is the proof? We know that, in general, “the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” He does not repent of any gifts which He hath bestowed upon the children of men. And how does the contrary appear, with regard to this particular gift of God? Why should we imagine that He will make an exception, with respect to the most precious of all



His gifts on this side of heaven? Is He not as able to give it us always as to give it once? As able to give it for fifty years as for one day? And how can it be proved that He is not willing to continue this, His loving kindness? How is this supposition, that He is not willing, consistent with the positive assertion of the apostle, who, after exhorting the Christians at Thessalonica, and in them all Christians in all ages, to "rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in everything give thanks," immediately adds [as if on purpose to answer those who denied, not the *power*, but the *will* of God to work in them], "For this is the will of God concerning you in Christ Jesus"? Nay, and it is remarkable that after He had delivered that glorious promise [such it properly is] in the twenty-third verse, "The very God of peace shall sanctify you wholly, and the whole of you" [so it is in the original]; "the spirit, the soul, and the body, shall be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ,"



he adds again, "Faithful is he that hath called you, who also will do it." He *will* not only sanctify you wholly, but will preserve you in that state, until He comes to receive you unto Himself.

Agreeably to this is the plain matter-of-fact. Several persons have enjoyed this blessing, without any interruption, for many years; several enjoy it at this day; and not a few have enjoyed it unto their death, as they have declared with their latest breath, calmly witnessing that God had saved them from all sin, till their spirit returned to God.

As to the whole of the objections taken from experience, I desire it may be observed further; either the persons objected to have attained Christian perfection, or they have not. If they have not, whatever objections are brought against them strike wide of the mark. For they are not the persons we are talking of; therefore, whatever they are or do, is beside the question. But if they have attained it, if they answer the description given under



the nine preceding articles, no reasonable objection can lie against them. They are superior to all censure. And "every tongue that riseth up against them, will they utterly condemn."

"But I never saw one," continues the objector, "that answered my idea of perfection." It may be so. And it is probable (as I observed elsewhere) you never will. For your idea includes abundantly too much; even freedom from those infirmities which are not separable from a spirit that is connected with flesh and blood. But if you keep to the account that is given above, and allow for the weakness of human understanding, you may see, at this day, undeniable instances of genuine, Scriptural perfection.

III. It only remains, in the third place, to expostulate a little with the opposers of this perfection.

Now permit me to ask, why are you so angry with those who profess to have attained this? and so mad [I cannot give it any softer title] against Christian



perfection — against the most glorious gift which God ever gave to the children of men upon earth? View it in every one of the preceding points of light, and see what it contains that is either odious or terrible; that is calculated to excite either hatred or fear in any reasonable creature.

What rational objection can you have to the loving the Lord your God with all your heart? Why should you be afraid of it? Would it do you any hurt? Would it lessen your happiness, either in this world or the world to come? And why should you be unwilling that others should give Him their whole heart? or that they should love their neighbors as themselves yea, “As Christ hath loved us”? Is this detestable? Is it the proper object of hatred? Or is it the most amiable thing under the sun? Is it proper to move terror? Is it not rather desirable in the highest degree?

Why are you so averse to having in you the whole “mind which was in Christ Je-



sus"—all the affections, all the tempers and dispositions, which were in Him, while He dwelt among men? Why should you be afraid of this? Would it be any worse for you, were God to work in you this very hour all the mind that was in Him? If not, why should you hinder others from seeking this blessing? or be displeased at those who think they have attained it? Is anything more lovely? anything more to be desired by every child of man?

Why are you averse to having the whole "fruit of the Spirit"—"love, joy, peace, longsuffering, meekness, gentleness, fidelity, goodness, temperance"? Why should you be afraid of having all these planted in your inmost soul? As "against these there is no law," so there cannot be any reasonable objection. Surely nothing is more desirable, than that all these tempers should take deep root in your heart; nay, in the hearts of all that name the name of Christ; yea, of all the inhabitants of the earth.

What reason have you to be afraid of,



or to entertain any aversion to, the being “renewed in the [whole] image of him that created you”? Is not this more desirable than anything under heaven? Is it not consummately amiable? What can you wish for in comparison of this, either for your own soul, or for those for whom you entertain the strongest and tenderest affection? And when you enjoy this, what remains but to be “changed from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord”?

Why should you be averse to universal holiness?—the same thing under another name. Why should you entertain any prejudices against this, or look upon it with apprehension? whether you understand by that term, the being inwardly conformed to the whole image and will of God; or an outward behavior, in every point suitable to that conformity. Can you conceive anything more amiable than this? anything more desirable? Set prejudice aside, and surely you will desire to see it diffused over all the earth.

Is perfection (to vary the expression)



the being "sanctified throughout, in spirit, soul and body" ? What lover of God and man can be averse to this, or entertain frightful apprehensions of it ? Is it not, in your best moments, your desire to be all of a piece ?—all consistent with yourself ?—all faith, all meekness, all love ? And suppose you were once possessed of this glorious liberty, would not you wish to continue therein ?—to be preserved "blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ ?"

For what cause should you that are the children of God be averse to, or afraid of, presenting yourselves, your souls and bodies, as a living sacrifice, holy acceptable to God ?—to God your Creator, your Redeemer, your Sanctifier ? Can anything be more desirable than this entire self-dedication to Him ? And is it not your wish that all mankind should unite in this "reasonable service" ? Surely no one can be averse to this, without being an enemy to all mankind.

And why should you be afraid of, or



averse to, what is naturally implied in this, namely, the offering up all your thoughts, and words, and actions, as a spiritual sacrifice to God ; acceptable to Him through the blood and intercession of His well-beloved Son ? Surely you cannot deny that this is good and profitable to men as well as pleasing to God. Should you not then devoutly pray, that both you and all mankind may thus worship Him in spirit and in truth ?

Suffer me to ask one question more. Why should any man with reason and religion be either afraid of, or averse to, salvation from all sin ? Is not sin the greatest evil on this side hell ? And if so, does it not naturally follow that an entire deliverance from it is one of the greatest blessings on this side heaven ? How earnestly then should it be prayed for by all the children of God ! By sin I mean, *a voluntary transgression of a known law.* Are you averse to being delivered from this ? Are you afraid of such a deliverance ? Do you then love sin, that you are



so unwilling to part with it? Surely no. You do not love either the devil or his works. You rather wish to be totally delivered from them; to have sin rooted out both of your life and your heart.

I have frequently observed, and not without surprise, that the opposers of perfection are more vehement against it when it is placed in this view, than in any other whatsoever. They will allow all you say of the love of God and man, of the mind which was in Christ, of the fruit of the Spirit, of the image of God, of universal holiness, of entire self-dedication, of sanctification in spirit, soul and body; yea, and of the offering up of all our thoughts, words and actions, as a sacrifice to God; all this they will allow, so we will allow sin, a little sin, to remain in us till death.

Pray compare this with that remarkable passage in John Bunyan's Holy War. "When Immanuel," says he, "had driven Diabolus and all his forces out of the city of Man-soul, Diabolus preferred a petition to Immanuel, that he might have only a



small part of the city. When this was rejected, he begged to have only a little room within the walls." But Immanuel answered, "He should have no place in it at all, no, not to rest the sole of his foot."

Had not the good old man forgot himself? Did not the force of truth so prevail over him here as utterly to overturn his own system? to assert perfection in the clearest manner? For if this is not salvation from sin, I cannot tell what is.

"No," says a great man, "this is the error of errors; I hate it from my heart. I pursue it through all the world with fire and sword." Nay, why so vehement? Do you seriously think there is no error under heaven equal to this? Here is something which I cannot understand. Why are those that oppose salvation from sin (few excepted) so eager—I had almost said, furious? Are you fighting *pro aris et focis*? for God and your country? for all you have in the world? for all that is near and dear unto you? for your liberty? your life? In God's name, why



are you so fond of sin? What good has it ever done you? What good is it ever likely to do you, either in this world, or in the world to come? And why are you so violent against those that hope for a deliverance from it? Have patience with us, if we are in an error; yea, suffer us to enjoy our error. If we should not attain it, the very expectation of this deliverance gives us present comfort; yea, and ministers strength, to resist those enemies which we expect to conquer. If you could persuade us to despair of that victory, we should give over the contest. Now "we are saved by hope"; from this very hope a degree of salvation springs. Be not angry with those who are *felices errore suo*; happy in their mistake. Else, be their opinion right or wrong, your temper is undeniably sinful. Bear then with *us*, as we do with *you*, and see whether the Lord will not deliver us! Whether He is not able, yea, and willing, "to save them to the uttermost that come unto God through him."



